

THE INDEPENDENT

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Anger goes to Africa

Lethal Lisa, queen of the Brits

FEATURES, PAGE 8

IN THE TUESDAY REVIEW + HEALTH

Expert discredits GM risks study

CLAIMS THAT genetically modified potatoes damaged the health of rats have been savaged by a scientist who took part in the experiments.

John Gatehouse, a reader in biological sciences at Durham University, said the effects allegedly observed by Arpad Pusztai of the Rowett Research Institute almost certainly have nothing to do with genetic modification. Dr Pusztai's supporters said experiments in which he fed GM potatoes to rats showed the act of genetic modification, rather than toxins used, caused immune suppression and stunted growth.

Dr Gatehouse, one of three leaders of the government-funded project, said he had spoken out because of irresponsible press reports.

If any rats became ill it was probably because of a build-up of natural toxins in the potatoes as a result of the plants being grown from tissue cultures.

BY STEVE CONNOR
Science Editor

There might be a scientific explanation for what Dr Pusztai has observed but it is not necessarily to do with genetic modification.

An effect of culturing plants from tissue, which was how the potatoes in the experiment were grown, is that they regenerate with high levels of natural toxins, which can stunt the growth of laboratory animals. Potatoes are naturally rich in toxins but can be made more poisonous by growing the plants from tissue cultures. "It

is an old effect and well known," Dr Gatehouse said.

Tony Blair stepped into the controversy with a claim that he would not hesitate to eat GM food. It echoed assurances about the safety of beef by the former Tory minister John Gummer, who tried to feed his daughter a beefburger.

The spokesman for the Prime Minister said he would not involve his children in the dispute, but it was clear the Government will not bow to pressure for a moratorium.

Later, Downing Street said Mr Blair was "concerned" about calls for a ban on GM foods. "He is concerned there should be no headlong rush into something which is completely unnecessary, because there is absolutely no scientific evidence to suggest there is anything harmful about the food that is being produced at the moment," a spokesman said.

Sources said that any British attempt to ban US imports of the three licensed items already genetically modified -

tomato paste, maize and soya - would spark a fresh trade war with America.

Other scientists have also criticised the interpretation of Dr Pusztai's results on grounds that natural toxins in raw potatoes can occur in surprisingly high amounts. Philip Dale, an expert on transgenic potatoes at the John Innes Centre in Norwich, said conventional cross-breeding experiments can throw up strains of potatoes that contain enough toxins to be poisonous to humans. "If we did

the same sort of tests [as Dr Pusztai] on conventional lines of potatoes, we'd be throwing them out, but that does not condemn all potatoes."

More than 20 "independent" scientists - mostly from abroad - have signed a memo supporting Dr Pusztai, saying his work was of a sufficient standard to be published in a peer-reviewed journal, the only way new research is accepted by the scientific community at large.

But Dr Gatehouse said he had studied the unpublished

"alternative report" written by Dr Pusztai - which he compiled as an answer to the criticism meted out in the Rowett official audit report into his work - and had found it contained serious problems.

"I think it looks to me to be too preliminary to publish. Personally I would be very unhappy making those conclusions where the margins of error are at least as big as the effects being reported," Dr Gatehouse said.

Political hot potato, page 3

Trimble set to lose grip on his party

THE ULSTER UNIONIST leader, David Trimble, is today in danger of losing his majority among Unionist members of the Northern Ireland Assembly when it votes on the future shape of government in the province.

While such a loss would be by no means fatal, it would represent a seepage of moral authority which the Rev Ian Paisley and other critics would attempt to exploit.

The vote, on the shape of proposed new government departments and linkages with the Irish Republic, is expected to pass the report on the new administration, since it will have the support of the pro-Good Friday Agreement parties which form a majority.

BY DAVID MCKITTRICK
Ireland Correspondent

without decommisioning, the episode has clearly shaken Sinn Fein's faith in him.

The decommisioning issue featured repeatedly during yesterday's debate in the assembly, with one former loyalist prisoner accusing some Unionists who insisted on decommisioning of hypocrisy. David Ervine, of the Progressive Unionist Party, the political wing of the Illegal Ulster Volunteer Force, said he was "not prepared to see the holier than thou attitude prevail."

"They need to remember, when they talk about honour and integrity and decency, how many of them had long and meaningful debates with me when I was a representative ... of the UVF - in meetings all over this country and, indeed, in some of their houses," he said.



The Ulster Unionist leader, David Trimble (right), and the Sinn Fein leader, Gerry Adams, at Stormont yesterday

But Mr Trimble, who is in waiting to become First Minister, has always had only a slender majority within Unionism itself, and this is now threatened by the attitude of two of his young assembly members.

One of these, Peter Weir, yesterday announced he would vote against his party today while another, Roy Beggs Jr, refused to reveal his intentions.

Assuming the plan for the new departments is accepted, the scene will be set for intense negotiations centred on arms decommisioning. Sinn Fein will press the government to proceed with the formation of a government, but Mr Trimble yesterday repeated that he will not enter an executive without IRA arms decommisioning.

The Sinn Fein position took a battering with the continuing controversy over what the Irish Prime Minister, Bertie Ahern, meant in a weekend interview. While Mr Ahern has beat a hasty retreat from the suggestion that he believed Sinn Fein should not be in an executive

Mr McGuinness held up an object which he said was part of a hand grenade used in a recent loyalist attack on nationalists. He said he believed it had been imported from South Africa "with the assistance of British military intelligence".

In a less combative contribution, Mr Trimble's nationalist deputy, Seamus Mallon of the SDLP, called on Sinn Fein to adhere to the Good Friday Agreement in letter and in spirit. He also warned Unionists that no decommisioning could be achieved outside the agreement.

Lawrence officer ruled out 8 suspects

THE DETECTIVE who led the Stephen Lawrence murder investigation for the first 15 months has been criticised by the public inquiry for prematurely ruling out up to eight suspects.

The inquiry has also concluded that Detective Superintendent Brian Weeden's decision to make arrests a fortnight after the murder in 1993 was probably influenced by a high-profile meeting between Stephen's family and the South African President, Nelson Mandela.

Details of the criticisms of Mr Weeden emerged yesterday after he pulled out of a BBC programme in which he and three other senior officers in the Lawrence case had agreed to be interviewed for the first time.

The 40-minute programme was to have been broadcast the day after publication next week of the inquiry report by Sir William Macpherson of Cluny.

Detective Superintendent Ian Crampton, who was in charge of the case for the first 72 hours, Detective Chief Superintendent William Isley, who had overall responsibility, and Detective Chief Superintendent Roderick Barker, author of an internal review, had also agreed to be interviewed.

Several meetings were held with the four officers, who are all retired. But yesterday Mr Weeden withdrew without giving a reason, forcing the BBC to abandon the project.

Mr Weeden was one of 23 officers named by *The Independent* yesterday as facing criticism in the report. A letter from the inquiry's lawyers has warned him he will be criticised on 13 counts.

It was revealed last week that detectives now believe that two of the five prime murder suspects, Gary Dobson and Luke Knight, were not involved, and that they are focusing on up to three new suspects.

The letter names up to eight suspects who, it says, Mr Weeden "eliminated ... without proper investigation".

It says he failed to use his own judgement when he took over from Mr Crampton, thus perpetuating the "fundamental error" of delaying arrests.

Mr Weeden "gave an unsatisfactory explanation" for his decision finally to make arrests, "a probability being that such decision was influenced by outside pressures". This refers to a meeting that took place on the day he made the decision, at which President Mandela told Stephen's family: "I'm deeply touched by the brutality of this murder. It's something we are all too used to in South Africa, where black lives are cheap."

The letter states that Mr Weeden will also be criticised for his failure "to know or understand the simple legal principle that reasonable suspicion can justify arrest". He told the public inquiry that he believed he needed evidence to arrest.

BY KATHY MARKS

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Raves from the grave

BY ANDREW BUNCOMBE

AS SONGS one might choose to play at a funeral go, Monty Python's "Always Look on the Bright Side of Life" is perhaps not the most obvious. Still, each to their own. Last year this was one of the top 10 tunes played as people were buried or cremated.

It was placed ninth behind, perhaps more suitably, songs such as "Knockin' On Heaven's Door" by Bob Dylan and "Stairway to Heaven" by rockers Led Zeppelin.

But in 1999 it appears there is no place for the jaunty theme tune from the Pythons' *Life of Brian*. Figures released yesterday by the Co-Operative Funeral Service revealed that Celine Dion is more in tune with those passing on. Her song, "My Heart Will Go On", from the film *Titanic*, is the most popular song played at funerals in Britain. In second place is "Candle in the Wind", by Elton John, last year's number one.

The survey shows that while traditional songs such as "Abide with Me" remain popular, they are increasingly being replaced by pop songs - especially at the funerals or cremations of younger people. One old-timer still proving popular is Frank Sinatra, who himself died last year.

The 1999 top 10: 1. "My Heart Will Go On" by Celine Dion; 2. "Candle in the Wind" by Elton John; 3. "Wind Beneath My Wings" by Bette Midler; 4. "Search For The Hero" by M-People; 5. "My Way" by Frank Sinatra; 6. "You'll Never Walk Alone" by Gerry and The Pacemakers; 7. "Release Me" by Engelbert Humperdinck; 8. "Memory" by Elaine Paige; 9. "Strangers in the Night" by Frank Sinatra; 10. "Bright Eyes" by Art Garfunkel.

INSIDE THIS SECTION

Pop, glitter and charity
Brit Awards stars want to put politics in pop to relieve Third World debt. Can it work?
Home P3

Cancer misdiagnoses case
Women win against hospital over cervical smear errors
Home P5

Parents act to protect earl
The Duke and Duchess of Northumberland won 7-year delay of son's £1m inheritance
Home P7

Iraq's mission fails
Turks rejected Deputy PM's plea to ban US warplanes
Foreign P11

Peking frees dissident
China released its best-known female political prisoner early, in time to celebrate New Year
Foreign P12

'Death by dragging' trial
Racist murder trial of three men opens in Texas
Foreign P13

Biotech plunges 17%
British Biotech plunged 17% as its star anti-cancer drug failed a key clinical trial
Business P15

Cup replay tickets slashed
Prices halved for Arsenal's cup replay with Sheffield Utd
Sport P25


INSIDE THE REVIEW

Charles Arthur
The Government may want you to eat GM food, but that doesn't mean it's had for you
Comment P4

Hamish McRae
Bill Clinton: World power or entertainment promoter?
Comment P5

Jeremy Laurance
Bring back stoicism: Let nature take its course and avoid doctors if at all possible
Health P9

Don't look now
Operations can be carried out with no anaesthetic
Health P10



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TODAY'S TELEVISION
BACK PAGE

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The strange case of the rats, the 'cover-up' and a political hot potato

BY CHARLES ARTHUR
Technology Editor

THE CASE of the rats, the potatoes and Dr Pusztai would be worthy of Sherlock Holmes. But would the famous literary sleuth detect malfeasance or accident in the events that have now entwined everyone from shoppers to the Prime Minister?

It began on a quiet Sunday in August last year. Granada TV put out a press release for an episode of *World in Action*, to be shown on the Monday night. In a report on genetically modified foods, it contained an interview with Dr Arpad Pusztai at the Rowett Institute in Aberdeen. He claimed that rats he had fed on genetically modified potatoes showed damage to their immune systems.

If true, it would be a shocking result. Amid the doldrums of the silly season, many newspapers headlined the claim even though the data had not been peer-reviewed or published in a scientific journal, which is the standard requirement for authenticity.



More mysterious was how Dr Pusztai would know the tests results. A properly designed experiment uses codes so that the person feeding the rats does not know whether they are feeding modified or "control" food to the animals, so that their observations of the results are uncoloured.

Only when the experiment is complete and the results collated is the code broken. So how could Dr Pusztai know before the end of the experiments that the potatoes had the claimed effect?

The chiefs at the Rowett Institute, where the Hungarian emigre, then 61, was working as an associate (because he was past his official retirement age, but retained for his expertise in plant poisons called lectins) moved quickly. They called in all the experimental data available.

Meanwhile, even the scientists who had supplied the modified potatoes to the institute expressed surprise. Lectins are



Dr Arpad Pusztai, the Rowett Institute researcher at the centre of the row over his experiments on the dangers of GM foods, takes samples from a transgenic potato

a known poison; of course if they were in the potatoes you would expect an effect, they said.

By the Tuesday, the Rowett chiefs had seen enough. Dr Pusztai was told to retire: the institute said that he had not even begun the experiments which would confirm the claims he had made on television; it regretted "the release of misleading information about issues of such importance".

Professor Philip James, the institute's director, said Con A, the lectin that was to be used, "is known to be a vicious stimulant of the immune system". And the experiments had been done only with normal potatoes spiked with Con A - not transgenic ones. "He got carried away," he said.

And that seemed to be that.

The debate continued but as the summer wore on it was crops - and their destruction - that came to the fore. Dr Pusztai's work, which had been funded by the Scottish Office, was apparently consigned to the dustbin. It was a sad end, said his colleagues, to what had been a distinguished career. Nobody doubted his expertise and experience. But he had made claims about an important topic that were not backed up by his work. That, to scientists, verges on blasphemy.

However, the renaissance of the issue of modified foods, apparently sparked three weeks ago by a question put by William Hague, the leader of the Opposition, shoved questions about food safety back into the limelight. Abruptly, Dr Pusztai's work regained its public profile.

The *Mail on Sunday* and *The Guardian* acquired information, including photographs, about the tests. More than 20 scientists signed a letter claiming that his work had been misrepresented.

At this point the mystery deepens again. Why did those scientists speak up for Dr Pusztai, and why now? Why not back the publication and peer-review, or at least the continuation to a conclusion of the work?

The names are a mixed bunch, combining medics, ecologists, paediatricians, vets and nutritionists. The oddest thing about their "declaration" was that they said a public airing of the data would "remove the stigma of alleged fraud". But nobody ever suggested that Dr

Pusztai committed fraud. Dr Pusztai is not allowed to speak about the work, as a condition of his contract, but in a letter to a supporter he said the Scottish Office was suppressing his "alternative report", adding: "At least some MPs ought to know that there has been a cover-up, so that when the

whole truth is revealed, they cannot say, 'I am afraid I did not know what was going on'."

Yesterday, one of Dr Pusztai's former colleagues was unhappy about what had happened. "I was a supporter of his, but not this. I'm sure he feels he's been wronged, and that he would like to get a little of his own back. But

the trouble is that truth and objectivity are getting left behind."

He added: "It gets beyond a joke when you're frightening people. If we're going to start using the *Daily Mail* as the place for publishing our results, we might as well give up science altogether."

HOW CONCERNS WERE RAISED

January 1998
With the Rowett Institute's permission, Dr Pusztai appears on *Newsnight* and expresses concern about weakened immune systems in rats fed GM potatoes.

April 1998
Preliminary findings of research given to government inspectors. Dr Pusztai gives interview to *World in Action*.

June 1998
Dr Pusztai's team is denied additional funding to continue research.

10 August 1998
World in Action broadcast in which Dr Pusztai says he would not eat GM potatoes. He says he found it "very, very unfair to use our fellow citizens as guinea pigs". Dr Pusztai is praised in press release issued by Professor Philip James.

11 August 1998
Demand in Commons for moratorium on GM food sales. Professor James again backs Dr Pusztai.

12 August 1998
Professor James suspends Dr Pusztai and announces an audit of his research. He says he regrets the release of "misleading information".

28 October
Audit report clears Dr Pusztai of scientific fraud but says his findings are not supported by his data.

14 February
Biotechnology companies have been offered millions of pounds by Government to encourage them to be in the UK, reveals the *Independent on Sunday*.

Can rock change the world when it starts preaching?

BY JOHN DAVISON

SO HERE we go again. Tonight Bono, a voice of political conscience for 15 years, will be back on his hind legs with heart firmly emblazoned on designer sleeve. Backing him will be a metaphorical chorus of music-industry stars, once more mobilised for a noble cause.

The lead singer of U2, whose previous protests have opposed violence from Belfast to Bosnia, will use the occasion of the Brit Awards to take up the rather more esoteric campaign of Third World debt relief. He and the other stars are joining the demand that rich Western governments should write off debts incurred by developing countries.

To do so they are signing up behind the Jubilee 2000 Coalition, which has been plugging at the issue for three years in its current form and as the Debt Crisis Network for years before that. If you haven't heard of either, while being aware of the underlying debate, you are about to hear a lot more.

The campaign is pushing for the ground-breaking decision to be made as a millennium "gift" to the poorer nations, and for the final push is going for all the big names it can muster.



Bono and friends at the finale of the Live Aid concert

cle around to maximum effect. But the history of pop and politics (with a small "p") has been rather more chequered than that, raising the question as to whether all the brouhaha works in the long term.

While the hippy counter-culture and its music, culminating in Woodstock, did have a huge impact on perceptions of the Vietnam War, the conflict continued for another six years.

Neither did Paul McCartney's 1970s call to "Give Ireland back to the Irish" halt what became 30 years of violence.

Red Wedge tours of the mid-Eighties failed to unseat Margaret Thatcher.

And who now remembers Rock the Vote - the music-industry attempt at mobilising

apathetic youth into mainstream political action? It was only three years ago.

Then, of course, there was Live Aid, which in 1985 raised \$200m world-wide and was attributed with saving a million lives in the Ethiopian famine.

With the benefit of a decade's hindsight, however, observers found it had changed little, and there was private criticism of naivety and inexperience from more established aid organisations about how things had been done.

turned by Africa every week in debt repayments. "This is a mature Live Aid, if you like," said Angela Travis, spokeswoman for the organisation.

"This is not a group of Europeans saying that we can help these poor people; it is an international movement that is as active in Africa and Latin America as it is here. It is people saying to their governments and to our government, 'We want you to sort this out and do something about it'."

Claire Lewis, celebrity co-ordinator from Oxford, which is part of the coalition, was in no doubt about how the music industry could raise the debt issue. "This can be seen as complex and quite burd," she said. "By doing this we want it to become a talking-point in the pub rather than between policy people from different charities."

Some, however, worry that relying on celebrity glitter may actually be part of the problem, by encouraging a parochial attitude to the world and its problems. "It's as if we can only look at somewhere foreign through the eyes of famous British people," said Paddy Coulter, director of the International Broadcasting Trust, which is co-owned by charities and produces television documentaries on development issues.

"It is almost impossible to get another perspective on television. It is distressing that this Anglo-centricity is so strong." Whether or not the stars manage to get this new message across will itself be worth watching.

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'People's Mayor' rallies his troops

"OBVIOUSLY, IT was a tough one for me between supporting Ken Livingstone and Peter Stringfellow... but at the last minute I came down in support of Ken."

As dedications of undying political devotion go, it was not exactly unqualified, but comedian Jo Brand launched the great "Let Ken Stand" campaign yesterday with a flash of deadpan that has become her trademark.

Livingstone and Brand doesn't yet have the same cachet as Morecambe and Wise or even Cannon and Ball, but the Ken and Jo Show got off to a flyer as the pair swapped one-liners sharper than Mr Stringfellow's winkle-pickers.

A collection of the curious and the politically obsessed converged on Westminster Central Hall last night to hear a succession of celebrities improvise around the theme of why Tony is rotten to Ken.

BY PAUL WAUGH
Political Correspondent

"Whose Party Is It Anyway?", a game in which Ken's fans attempt to persuade Millbank that he is not the anti-Christ, was performed ably by old stagers including the novelist Beryl Bainbridge, *Drop the Dead Donkey* actor Neil Pearson and Diane Abbott MP.

The motley line-up recalled the heyday of Mr Livingstone's GLC rule, when parachuting lesbians were guests of honour at County Hall, but Ms Brand was always firmly in charge.

A veteran of a thousand benefit gigs, the Channel 4 star had earlier achieved the impossible, leaving Ken speechless, when she launched his campaign to be allowed on the Labour shortlist of candidates for Mayor of London.

Appearing as Eddie Large to Ken's Syd Little, she intervened when reporters asked if the



Laugh? I nearly spoiled my ballot paper: Jo Brand, Ken Livingstone and Mark Seddon, editor of Tribune, last night

inclusion of non-Labour Party members in the campaign represented "big tent" politics. "Is the Sun here? They'd love that, me and a big tent," she quipped.

Mr Livingstone was not to be outdone. "I just got better at making you laugh while I dip my hand into your pocket," was his summary of his post-GLC days.

But he preferred to concen-

trate on the more serious business of his political career. "I regret it is necessary to have this meeting," he said in the tones of a disappointed headmaster. "But there have been extensive briefings given to lobby journalists and others which suggest that I will be blocked from standing."

Crucially, Mr Livingstone stressed that "under no circumstances" would he stand as

an independent candidate if the unthinkable should occur. "I have given my entire adult life to Labour and I don't intend walking away from it," he said. Hardliners in Labour's Millbank HQ have warned they will be looking closely into the campaign's funding to check if extremists are involved.

The MP did reveal the identity of his backers, but unfortunately the Great London

Public is not yet on Downing Street's list of proscribed militant organisations.

His advert in London's Evening Standard had raised £3,400, an average of £24 per "ordinary Londoner," he said. That works out as a total of 142 backers, not the kind of support to make Number 10 quake.

Even so, Mr Livingstone declared he would publish a full list of his donations at the end

of the campaign. More substantial backing could come from two unions which had approached him with offers of help, as well as a "Luvvies for Ken" group set up by Mr Pearson.

Ominously, however, Ms Brand warned that if Mr Livingstone let his supporters down, she was not afraid to use the ultimate put-down. "If he puts a foot wrong, it's Stringfellow or Archer," she said.

Doctors fatally mistook fracture

BY STEPHEN GOODWIN
Scotland Correspondent

MEDICAL STAFF at a Glasgow hospital thought a 16-year-old boy was behaving aggressively because he had been drinking or taking drugs. In fact, he had fractured his skull in a fall.

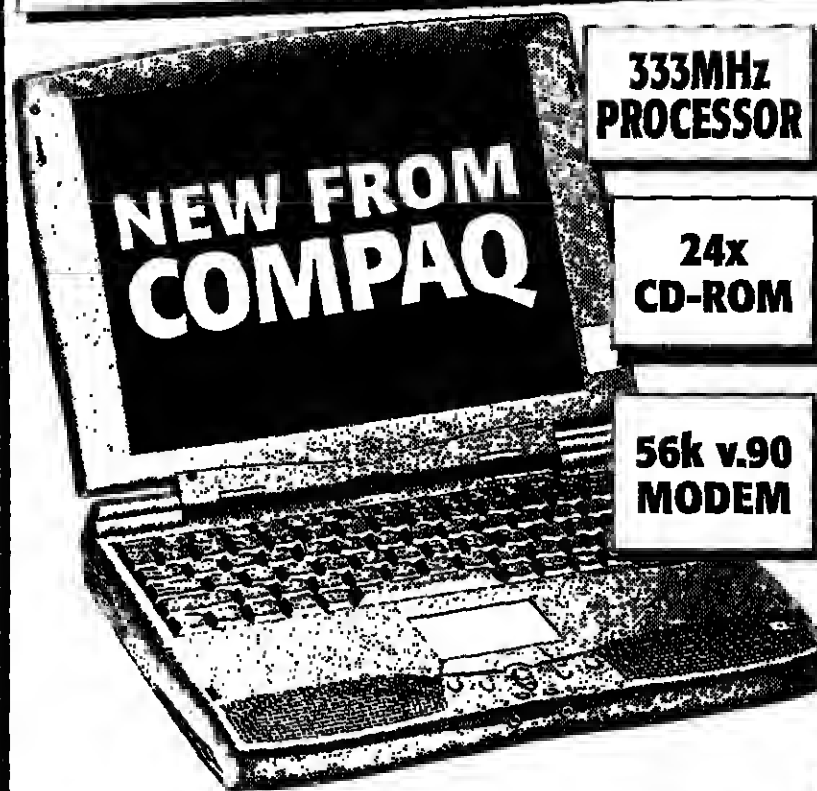
A fatal accident inquiry at Glasgow Sheriff Court heard yesterday that staff at the Victoria Infirmary called the police and Gordon Niven was arrested and held in a cell for three hours. He died two days later in another hospital.

Gordon, from the Shawlands area of Glasgow, had been injured in a fall off a bicycle but the injury was only suspected hours later by a police surgeon called to the cells.

His mother, Patricia Niven, broke down in the witness box as she described seeing her son in the Victoria Infirmary on 23 September 1997. "There was blood on his face," she said. But staff seemed more concerned about his behaviour. He was lashing out and had punched a nurse. A consultant told Mrs Niven Gordon had been drinking vodka and as head injuries went, his was not that bad. A nurse said he had the "classic behaviour of a drug addict." The inquiry continues.

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MODEL: Satellite 2520 CDT.

Tube strike attacked by Government

THE GOVERNMENT unexpectedly attacked the trade union which called a 48-hour strike on the London Underground.

John Reid, the Transport Minister, said it was "unreasonable and unnecessary" and described the demands of the Rail Maritime and Transport union as unrealistic. Yesterday's attack boosted Tube bosses, who said the strike was a flop, with about two-thirds of services running. But thousands of rush-hour commuters suffered disruption.

Mr Reid said: "The strike is unreasonable, unnecessary and damaging to the long-term future of London Underground and its employees... When the Government is working for resources to revitalise and modernise the Tube, this does nothing to help and everything to undermine public support. It is regrettable so many people are being inconvenienced but fortunate that many union members have turned out to give the public a service."

The intervention by Mr Reid, who is in the T&G transport union, was a blow for the RMT. On Sunday Glenda Jackson,

BY PHILIP THORNTON
Transport Correspondent

Under-Secretary of State for Transport, said the Government would not intervene.

The strike began at 6pm on Sunday and is to end at the same time today. The union wants assurances there will be no compulsory redundancies or changes to employment conditions under plans for partial privatisation.

Mr Reid said the demands were "totally unrealistic". Assurances had been given over safeguarding terms and conditions, employment rights, pensions and free travel.

"The Government will not be deflected from its determination to modernise the Tube and give Londoners the Underground service they deserve," he said.

LU said 65 per cent of trains were running by noon yesterday and only nine stations were closed. Some 58 per cent of trains ran in the morning rush hour, when 25 stations were shut. A spokesman said LU was running a near-perfect service on some lines.

IN BRIEF

Police stand down murder hunt

POLICE INVESTIGATING the deaths of an elderly couple at their cottage in Freland, Oxfordshire, said yesterday they were not looking for anyone else. Martin Lawrie is now thought to have killed his wife, Joan, before taking his own life. "We want to dispel rumours somebody killed this couple and is now on the loose," a police spokesman said.

Police mountain climbers found

FIVE CLIMBERS reported overdue from a mountain ascent in the Highlands were found safe yesterday. The men, believed to be from Greater Manchester Police, had made a 999 call at midday. An RAF spokesman said they were picked up by helicopter and flown to the foot of Creag Meagaidh near Laggan, Inverness.

Tag-scheme inmate freed in error

PAUL LOMAS, who served six months of a 30-month term for grievous bodily harm, was mistakenly freed for two weeks under the tagging scheme 24 hours after it started. Lomas, who kept to his curfew conditions, was arrested and returned to prison in Cleveland on Friday.

Pay cut threat to arms workers

UNIONS REPRESENTING thousands of Royal Ordnance workers were warned yesterday that pay could be frozen or cut because of falling orders. Company officials said the munitions manufacturer was suffering "huge losses".

Hissing Sid goes round the bend

SID, A HARMLESS six-foot snake, may be on the loose in Plymouth sewers after escaping down a toilet bowl while being washed in the bath by his owner, Neil Crosssett.

TERENCE BLACKER

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IN THE TUESDAY REVIEW PAGE 4

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Women win screening test case

THREE WOMEN have won a landmark High Court case against the hospital that wrongly diagnosed their cervical smears and failed to warn them that they had cancer.

In the first case to come to court because of Britain's biggest cervical smear screening scandal, Mr Justice Peppitt ruled yesterday afternoon that the women were victims of medical negligence at the Kent and Canterbury Hospital. Eight women are believed to have died and at least 30 women had to have hysterectomies after failures at the hospital.

But East Kent Health Authority has denied negligence on behalf of the hospital in a number of cases.

Helen Palmer, 35, of Whitstable, Sandra Penney, 35, of Ramsgate, and Lesley Cannon, 38, from the Isle of Sheppey all claimed that hospital screeners misread their smear tests, and as a result they all contracted adenocarcinoma, a less common form of cervical cancer. All three have had hysterectomies to remove the cancer.

The dispute in the 10-day court case centred on whether cyto-screener, the laboratory technicians that examine slides, should have been able to spot signs of pre-cancerous material when the smears were taken between 1990 and 1992.

Mr Justice Peppitt, sitting at Canterbury County Court, said: "The screeners had a clear duty of care to their patients to refer any borderline slides to a senior analyst or even a pathologist for checking." This they had failed to do.

Of Mrs Penney's case, the judge said, "In my judgement no competent cyto-screener should have dismissed the pos-

BY PAUL LASHMAR

sibility that the cells might have been pre-cancerous."

He added that a reasonably competent cyto-screener should have classified the smear as borderline even if it had caused Mrs Penney to suffer short-term distress and possibly another smear test.

In the case of Mrs Palmer, he asked "whether a reasonably competent screener would have been justified" in not spotting the cells were abnormal. He said the screener of Mrs Palmer's second smear test in March 1990 was in breach of his duty of care to Mrs Palmer by reporting it as negative.

The three women will now apply to the court for compensation. The hospital trust has already admitted that the screening department was poorly run, underfunded, poorly managed and the screeners inadequately trained. It has settled 47 cases at a cost of more than £1m but has refused in a number of others to pay compensation.

The judgment against the hospital will have national implications. The East Kent Health Authority had argued that its screeners were comparable with screeners elsewhere at the time. The women's lawyers had argued these standards were not high enough. The women's solicitor, Sarah Harman, said she hoped the ruling would set a benchmark for the standards women could expect from the cervical screening programme.

She said: "I think there are some very worrying aspects that have been heard in evidence from experts and very different views. There are dif-



Helen Palmer and Lesley Cannon celebrate outside court in Canterbury yesterday after winning their case

Phil Houghton/KNP

ferent standards in different laboratories throughout the country and I think some action needs to be taken." She said it was "dreadful" the three women should have suffered in the way they had done.

The judge praised the overall efficiency of the national screening programme and stressed that women should continue to use it.

"This is a case of great concern to women but nothing I have heard justifies worry as this occurred a number of years ago and these screenings represent a fraction of the thou-

sands taken each year. It should also not discourage cyto-screeners, a body of devoted and conscientious men and women who do difficult jobs under testing circumstances," he added.

"Rather it should emphasise they should not assume the

agonising responsibility of judging between cancerous and benign cells.

Outside the court Lesley Cannon said: "I'm going to sue, I want compensation. I don't know how much, just loads of money to pay for a brilliant holiday. This verdict means hos-

pitals are going to have to be a lot stricter... if someone gets a negative result, they should now be able to say it is truly negative."

The director of the NHS trust, Tim Smith, said: "It is too early to say whether we shall appeal."



John Leach with the captive submarine Simon Burt

Captain says salvage fee is sub-standard

FOR THE AVERAGE Cornish fisherman, the rescue of a Royal Navy submarine might be a cause for celebration in the expectation of salvage fees.

John Leach and his crew could have been forgiven for thinking so after they found just such a sub in their fishing nets last year, but any celebrations were decidedly premature.

After the crew of his boat, the *Brilliantia V*, caught the 11ft yellow submarine after it bobbed

BY KATE WATSON-SMITH

to the surface off the coast near Falmouth, Mr Leach said that he was hiding it from the Ministry of Defence until an agreeable salvage fee was paid.

The Remote Counter Mine Disposal System, to give it its proper name, was initially valued at £1m and Mr Leach had hoped to claim up to £150,000. Thus the RCMDS, normally used to track mines and ship-

wrecks, languished in a barn at a secret location in Cornwall while the two sides argued over the salvage fee.

Yesterday, a chastened Mr Leach, who has finally been awarded £50,000 for his part in salvaging the lost submarine last March, took the view that if he had the misfortune to see another one floating past his trawler, he would take no notice.

"I had hoped that it would be settled before now. The money

will be divided between the crew but, as it stands, we are out of pocket because of legal costs. If we saw another one and it was up to me I would probably say leave it where it is because it has been more than enough hassle."

Charles Hattersley, Mr Leach's lawyer, said yesterday that an agreement had been reached without the case having to go before the Admiralty Courts in London. "My client

provided a very good service, carrying out a difficult salvage extremely carefully and very professionally," he said.

The RCMDS was lost from HMS *Cromer* during the Royal Navy's search for the Newlyn fishing boat *Margaretha Maria* off the French coast in December 1997.

A spokesman for the Ministry of Defence confirmed that an "amicable out-of-court settlement" had been reached.

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Will Tony Benn find himself in one of Straw's gulags?

JACK STRAW did not quite suspend habeas corpus but he made several dramatic strides in that direction to enhance his authoritarian reputation as a "tough" home secretary. Tory home secretaries talked tough but Mr Straw acts tough and yesterday he became the first one in living memory to propose measures to incarcerate people who have not actually been convicted by any court.

Even the last home secretary, Michael Howard, when chasing the wind of popular opinion, never had the courage to be so breath-takingly liberal. There would have been a time when withdrawal of the

liberty of the subject would have caused a riot in the House of Commons but Mr Straw knows he has that great Labour asset of public opinion firmly on his side.

Sex offenders are good scapegoats for society's ills and few MPs were going to give him much trouble when he announced proposals to detain people with "severe personality disorders", regardless of whether they had been convicted of any offence. Mr Straw proposed new legal powers for "indeterminate but reviewable detention of dangerously personality-disordered individuals" where it could be established that the individual had a

recognised severe personality disorder and was a grave risk to the public. He did not set out precisely what such a disorder was but most MPs assumed it was to do with sexual offences.

But, knowing the extent to which this government will go to snuff out opposition from within its ranks, there was no guarantee that Ken Livingstone, Rhodri Morgan and their fellow travellers may not yet be restrained from the London mayoralty and the Welsh Assembly under these proposals. The Tory shadow spokesman, Sir Norman Fowler, broadly welcomed the proposals and joined in the general

THE SKETCH



MICHAEL BROWN

scapegoating, with talk of the need to protect the "safety of the public and children". But there was a hint of unease in some quarters, with a

few brave souls on both sides prepared to break cover.

Tony Benn (Lab, Chesterfield) was in a state of genuine outrage. He was so unable to contain his fury that, although the Speaker had called Gerry Bermingham, he belted out his question without realising that Miss Boothroyd had not called him. He reminded the Home Secretary of the adverse consequences of internment 30 years ago in Northern Ireland and drew attention to the horrors of mental health treatment and punishment in the former Soviet Union.

Gwyneth Dwyer (Lab, Crewe and Nantwich), not normally known for wishy-washy liberal

views, sounded a note of caution by referring to the "abuse of human rights" by such incarceration. Even Brian Mawhinney (Con, North West Cambridgeshire), the ultimate prince of Tory darkness, while welcoming the proposals, nevertheless sounded a note of caution. "Depriving people of their liberty is so important and serious a step."

And where were the Liberal Democrats in all this? One might have expected the inheritors of the traditions of the liberty of the subject handed down by Gladstone, Lloyd George and Grimond at least to have made some effort to put up

resistance to the Government but Simon Hughes (North Southwark & Bermondsey) made little effort beyond a bland reference to the duty of the state in protecting individual liberty.

It was all a far cry from the permissive society presided over by Mr Straw's illustrious Labour predecessor, Lord Jenkins, when he was home secretary in the 1960s and 70s. Mr Straw seemed to draw his inspiration from Lord Liverpool's government of the early nineteenth century, whose repressive measures guaranteed uninterrupted power for 15 years.

Thomas Sutcliffe is away

Psychopaths plan will hit the innocent

DANGEROUS PSYCHOPATHS will be locked up indefinitely, even if they have not committed a crime, under government powers announced yesterday by the Home Secretary, Jack Straw.

The proposals were greeted with anger by civil liberties groups and scepticism by some probation staff who predicted that plans to house up to 4,000 potentially dangerous people in special units would be too costly and controversial to ever get off the ground.

But the Government is determined to plug legal loopholes that allow dangerous people with severe personality disorders to live in the community without supervision. Mr Straw said the public was not being protected properly. Under current mental health laws, people can be detained only if doctors believe their condition is treatable and most professionals believe severe personality disorders are beyond remedy. Psychopaths who have committed a serious crime must be released from prison at the end of their sentence even if they are still judged to be dangerous.

MENTAL HEALTH
BY IAN BURRELL
Home Affairs Correspondent

Mr Straw said: "They may have been convicted of crimes carrying only a limited determinate sentence and will have to be released at the end of their sentence, even though they may themselves have warned staff of their certainty of recommitting serious offences on release. The safety of the public is our prime concern."

The human rights group Liberty described yesterday's development as "deeply problematic and quite shocking". The director, John Wadham, said: "Proving you are not dangerous is almost impossible and there is no doubt that some people who are no danger will be locked up."

The Bar Council said Mr Straw risked "opening a can of worms". A spokesman said: "Plans to lock someone up before they have committed a crime need to be examined extremely carefully given the presumption of innocence in our legal system."

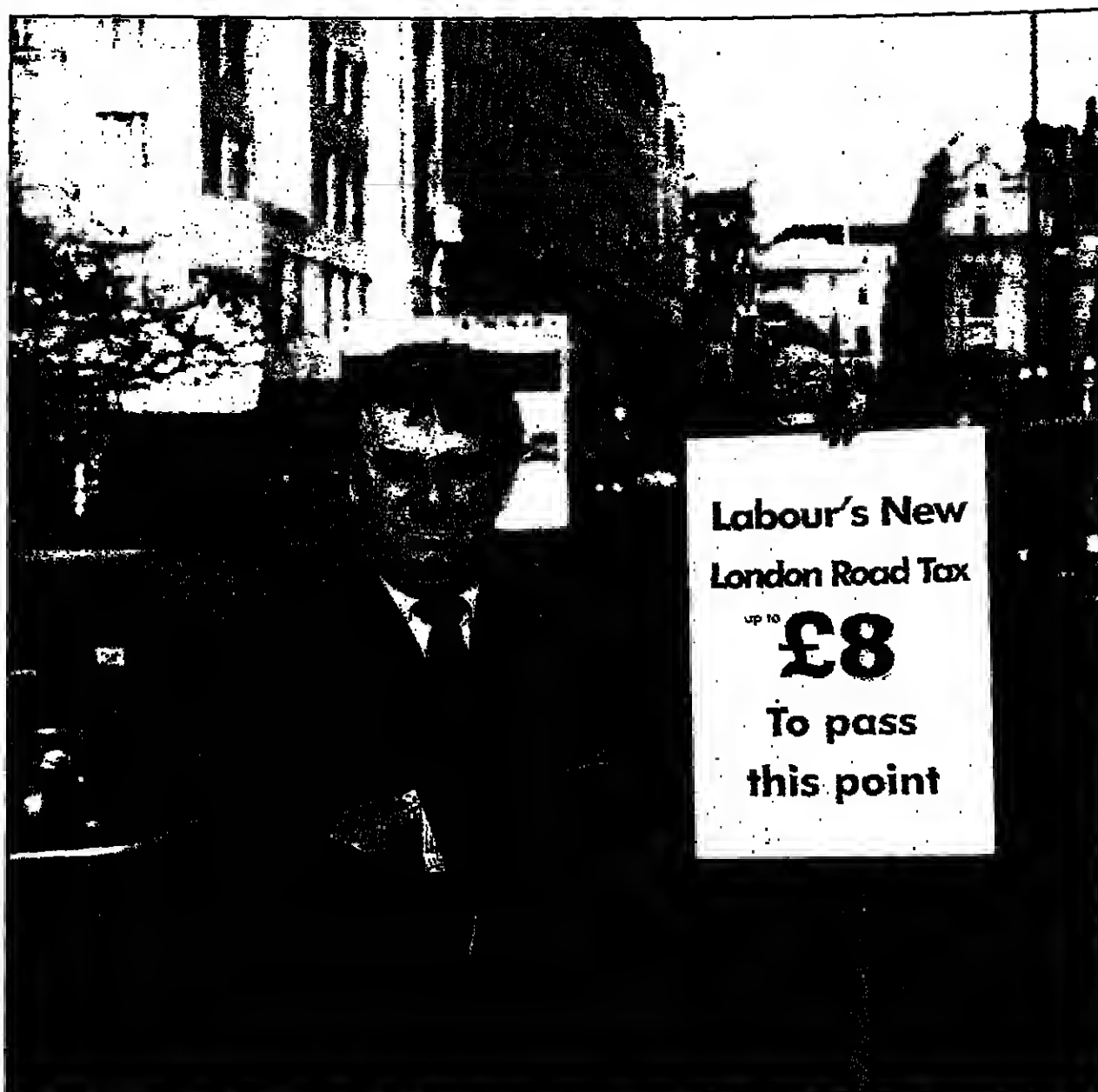
But Mr Straw said: "We

recognise that detaining people indefinitely on the basis that they pose a danger is a serious step. We will ensure the system of ordering detention involves a robust system of checks and balances covering legal and clinical issues. Once in detention there will be regular quasi-judicial reviews of the justification for continued detention."

Mr Straw's action follows the outcry over the failure to detain Michael Stone, who was convicted of the murders of Lyn Russell and her daughter, Megan, after his pleas for hospital treatment were ignored.

Mr Straw said short-term measures would be introduced. An early-warning system will be set up and a central support group will draw up plans for housing freed psychopaths, which will be subject to a consultation exercise.

Harry Fletcher, of the National Association of Probation Officers, said any such units would encounter big planning problems. He said: "I don't think that this will see the light of day because of the enormous practical problems associated with it."



Richard Ottaway, MP for Croydon South and Tory spokesman on London, protesting on Waterloo Bridge yesterday against provisions in the Greater London Authority Bill for traffic congestion charging

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Tax aid for art market urged

HARMONISATION
BY SARAH SCHAEFER
Political Reporter

DAWN PRIMAROLO, the Paymaster General, will make an eleventh-hour attempt to exempt London's £2.5bn art market from European Union taxes today, arguing the charges would damage its international competitiveness.

Ms Primarolo has requested a meeting in Brussels with the European commissioner Mario Monti to discuss the planned harmonisation of VAT on imported art ahead of a meeting with European Union members on 25 February.

The harmonisation of taxes on art, antiques and jewellery would raise VAT in Britain from 2.5 per cent to 5 per cent. It would be combined with the introduction of *droit de suite*, which will give resale rights and a royalty payment to the artist's family up to 70 years after his or her death. While the change will benefit artists, it could drive dealers to rival centres, such as New York and Geneva.

Britain has no automatic right to block the proposals, but Ms Primarolo hopes to convince Commissioner Monti to apply a reduced rate of VAT throughout Europe.

Hereditary peers fight on for right to speak in debates

HEREDITARY PEERS should continue to be allowed to speak in debates once their voting rights are scrapped, the Tories said yesterday.

They claimed that if this was not preserved the upper chamber's ability to scrutinise legislation would suffer.

Sir Patrick Cormack, the Deputy Shadow Commons leader, launched the last-ditch attempt to save some rights of hereditary peers during the detailed committee stage of the House of Lords reform Bill.

Pointing to many hours of "selfless duty" provided by hereditaries, Sir Patrick sug-

gested that until stage two of the reform, they would not be allowed to vote but would be able to attend debates and speak in them.

"We are fearful that if a great many people who had a lot to contribute are suddenly obliged to withdraw, the quality of work in the Lords won't be what it was hitherto," he said.

But ministers are opposed to the measure, arguing they have already indicated that they will accept an amendment to be put forward by Lord Weatherill.

A spokesman for the Prince

the chairman of the cross-benchers, under which 91 hereditaries will be retained until stage two of the reform.

The full reform of the upper chamber is being considered by a Royal Commission chaired by Lord Wakeham, the Tory former cabinet minister, and is expected to publish its proposals at the end of the year.

The Tories withdrew an amendment to grant the exemption of the Prince of Wales from the Bill, insisting they would have included it only with "the express consent of the Prince of Wales".

A spokesman for the Prince

of Wales denied there had been any pressure from his office and such amendments were a matter for the Opposition.

Speaking in the Commons, Sir Patrick claimed a sudden removal of hereditaries' rights to attend would throw "large consequential burdens" on life peers and damage the effective scrutiny of legislation.

Richard Shepherd, the Tory MP for Aldridge-Brownhills, could not agree with his own front bench. "In truth, I have the greatest difficulty taking this call very seriously. I believe in an elected second chamber."

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Fear in Ulster

MORE THAN 1,350 applications were made in seven months by people in Northern Ireland wishing to leave their homes because of intimidation, the Northern Ireland Minister Adam Ingram disclosed.

BSE figures

THERE WERE 4,148 cases of BSE reported in Britain in the 12 months to the end of last month, compared with 5,528 the previous year, junior agriculture minister Lord Donoughue said.

Today's Agenda

Commons: 2.30pm Foreign Office questions
House of Lords Bill, committee.
Lords: 2.30pm Access to Justice Bill, report.
Northern Ireland Arms Decommissioning Act (Amnesty Period) Order.

£40bn in hidden taxes, say Tories

THE CONSERVATIVES accused Gordon Brown of being the "pickpocket Chancellor" yesterday when they launched a campaign claiming the Government had imposed hidden tax rises worth £40bn.

The shadow Chancellor, Francis Maude, said that Mr Brown had deceived the public with a series of "stealth taxes" on petrol, company cars, mortgages, health insurance and the married couple's allowance.

In a reworking of the "double whammy" tax campaign they used in their 1992 election success, the Tories claimed that recent rises would cost an average family £700 a year.

However, Mr Maude refused to say which taxes his own party would cut, saying that voters would have to "wait for my first Budget" to find out.

To encourage a more honest approach, prices for petrol and beer should make clear how much of the total is tax and excise duty, he said.

Similarly, annual statements should be sent to taxpayers with details of the exact amount of income tax and national insurance paid.

More than £5bn a year was

being raised on pension funds, mortgage interest tax relief had been cut by a third and the married couple's allowance had been reduced by a third.

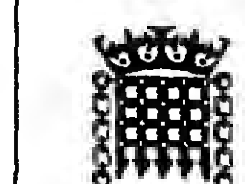
The overall tax burden, measured as tax and social security contributions as a proportion of gross domestic product, would rise from 35.7 per cent in 1996-97 to 37.7 in 2001-02.

"They deliberately gave the impression that they would not be increasing taxes at all - they have broken that promise and it's time for us as the Opposition to hold them to account," he said.

Mr Maude admitted that the Conservatives had been damaged by their own record on taxation and had lost the public's "trust" before the last election. But the party was "determined" to regain its reputation as the party of low taxes, he said.

Downing Street dismissed the claims yesterday. "We are confident that people are significantly better off as a result of the policies taken over the last two years," a spokesman said.

THE HOUSE



Iraqi conflict

TAM DALYELL, the Labour MP for Linlithgow, called for a Commons statement after the latest United States bombing raids on Iraq's northern and southern no-fly zones. He said: "Ought the House of Commons not to have it clarified as to whether we are at a state of war or not... because if we are not at a state of war, if there was either a direct hit or a malfunction by a Tornado, then the position of any pilots, British or American, would be simply painful."

Migrants stay

VERY FEW of the 8,000 illegal immigrants smuggled in by lorry last year have been deported, the Home Office minister Mike O'Brien admitted, blaming the inherited system for delays in dealing with immigration and asylum cases.

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(*Vireo olivaceus*)
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Grey-cheeked thrush
(*Catharus minimus*)
Of the *Catharus* genus, the nightingale-thrushes. Summers from Newfoundland to Siberia. Winters in South America. Food includes insects, snails and fruit.



Yellow-billed cuckoo
(*Coccyzus americanus*)
Of the non-parasitic cuckoo sub-family *Phoenicophaginae*. Summer range from Canada to Mexico. Winters from Venezuela and Colombia south. Eats insects, caterpillars and fruit.



Blackpoll warbler
(*Denroica striata*)
Part of the *Parulidae* family of wood warblers but not related to European warblers. Summer range from Alaska to New York, winters from Panama southward. Eats insects and fruit.



Rose-breasted grosbeak
(*Phainopepla nitens*)
Of the *Cardinalidae* sub-family, part of the wider bunting family. Summer range from central Canada to New England, winters from Mexico to Ecuador. Eats insects, fruit and seeds.



Swainson's thrush
(*Catharus ustulatus*)
Of the *Catharus* genus, the nightingale-thrushes. Summer range from Alaska to Appalachia, winters from Mexico to Argentina. Eats insects, worms, snails, slugs and fruit.

A SMALL bird that normally spends its time catching insects in American treescapes has emerged as the star performer when it comes to flying across the Atlantic.

The red-eyed vireo, which weighs less than an ounce, has been recorded far more often than any of the 43 other types of Canada or United

BY BRIAN UNWIN

States-nesting landbirds that have turned up in Britain and Ireland since the mid 1980s.

A new league table shows that this fin-long greenish-coloured songbird is overwhelming champion with 107 British Isles appearances in the past three decades - more

than twice the number of its nearest rival.

The runner-up is the grey-cheeked thrush with 43 sightings, followed by the yellow-billed cuckoo with 35, the blackpoll warbler with 24, the rose-breasted grosbeak with 23 and Swainson's thrush with 20. The rest turned up fewer than 20 times, with most in single fig-

ures. According to the report in the latest edition of *British Birds*, 73 of the vireos appeared here between 1987 and 1996. The top year was 1995 when 21 were discovered, with 12 in 1988, 10 in 1990 and 1996, and 1 to 6 in each of the other years.

Meanwhile more have been flying into other parts of Eu-

rope - with record numbers in Iceland, Holland, Germany, Belgium, France and Malta - and one reached Morocco.

Norman Elkins, who produced the report, says that of 17 American songbirds seen around the British Isles during 7-12 October 1995, 11 were vireos - and the evidence suggested the first of them left

the United States on 3 October.

These birds travelled thousands of miles off course from their normal autumn migration route from the USA and Canada to the West Indies and Central and South America.

Mr Elkins says this wrong turning could be due to a tendency to go north-eastwards -

towards Europe - if they meet a weather pattern comprising south-westerly winds ahead of a cold front.

The large number recorded in 1995 "supports this possibility", he adds. Weather maps for the period show warm south-westerlies developed ahead of the westernmost cold front as it began to return northwards

as a warm front. The decrease in the general flow of American songbirds to Europe could be caused by population decreases linked to loss of forest habitat in both their northern nesting and tropical wintering regions. Against this trend, red-eyed vireo populations are reported to have increased in north-east America.

Teachers offer to do a deal on pay

THE SECOND biggest teaching union offered to do a deal over performance-related pay yesterday to avoid industrial action in schools.

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, said most staff would accept pay linked to appraisals by heads.

But he warned that ministers would have to compromise on plans to bring pupils' examination targets into the pay formula and repeated warnings of industrial action if teachers' demands are not met.

A union-commissioned poll of 1,000 teachers published yesterday found 57 per cent were willing to accept a link between pay and appraisal "which takes account of skill, knowledge, ability and effort". Three-quarters of those polled also agreed with proposals to introduce maths, English and computer tests for trainee teachers.

In contrast, 73 per cent disagreed with proposals linking pay to the progress of pupils and more than half disagreed with the Government's "fast-track" proposals for rapid advancement for teachers with exceptional ability.

The NASUWT poll offers the Government the first hope of reconciliation after the publication earlier this month of detailed proposals for pay linked to performance.

But Mr de Gruchy warned: "This system will not work unless the Government gets the agreement of the majority of teachers. There is no way that

BY BEN RUSSELL
Education Correspondent

what they are proposing now will do that."

A spokesman for the Department for Education and Employment welcomed the poll results. He said: "We confirm again our readiness to talk about the criteria for assessing teachers' performance."

The biggest teaching union, the National Union of Teachers, has already threatened a series of one-day strikes over the package. Other union leaders have warned that annual appraisal is "unmanageable".

Under government plans, teachers will have to pass an annual "MOT", based on exam targets and appraisals by managers, to win pay rises.

Staff at the top of the teachers' pay scale - currently £23,000 a year for an ordinary classroom teacher - can apply to pass a nationally regulated "performance threshold".

Teachers have reacted with anger at plans to force them to set annual targets for their pupils' performance - and to have pay decided partly on whether the targets are met.

David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education, has promised £1bn over two years to fund the proposals, from which he says most teachers will benefit. Mr de Gruchy said the union would favour a system that gave teachers a main appraisal twice in their careers, but warned that an annual system would put too great a burden on teachers.

Court frees suspect in Julie Ward case

THE CASE against one of the men accused of murdering the British tourist Julie Ward in Kenya 11 years ago was dropped yesterday.

David Nchoko, a clerk in the Masai Mara game reserve, and the former head warden, Simon ole Makallah, were accused of killing Ms Ward, 28, in September 1988. Their trial was due to start in Nairobi next week.

Ms Ward's mother, Jan, from Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, said yesterday: "We heard from Kenya earlier today that the

case against David Nchoko has been thrown out through insufficient evidence."

John Ward has spent the past 10 years trying to identify his daughter's killers and bring them to justice.

It is believed the case will proceed against Mr Makallah.

A Foreign Office spokesman said: "David Kandula - ole Nchoko was today acquitted of the murder of Julie Ward because of the lack of evidence. Simon Makallah's next hearing will be on 26 February."

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BA frying the flag

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The airline has hired Roy Ackerman - owner of London's posh restaurants Chez Nico and the Gay Hussar - to help it into the down-to-earth food and drink market.

BA is well on the way to finalising plans for a 15,000 sq ft pilot scheme in London's former County Hall, and is considering opening other restaurants around the

country. It hopes to give diners exotic dishes whose ingredients have been flown into Britain on a BA flight earlier that day.

One project insider said "It would be great to know that the lobster you are eating in London was flown in from New England that morning."

Bosses are hoping the project will feed some much-needed cash into the airline.

Last week BA nose-dived into the red for the first time since privatisation in 1987 by reporting losses of £75 million for the last three months of 1998.

Daily Star 15 February

Restaurants by BA!

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Turkey rejects Iraq plea as jets strike

AS AMERICAN and British warplanes again pounded targets in northern and southern Iraq, allegedly killing five people in the process, Baghdad appeared to have failed yesterday in a mission to Turkey aimed at prising open the ring of foes that encircles it.

After a meeting in Ankara, Prime Minister, Bulent Ecevit, rejected the urgings of Tariq Aziz, the Iraqi Deputy Premier, that Turkey stop American aircraft from using the Incirlik base in the south-east of the country as a base to patrol the no-fly zone imposed by the Gulf War allies in northern Iraq.

The visit by Mr Aziz - forced into a hard overland journey precisely because of the ban on Iraqi planes in the region - is part of a wider strategy by Baghdad to gain some elbow room in the region, alongside a ferocious propaganda campaign against Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, and efforts to mend fences with the old enemy Iran.

But this trip by a senior Iraqi figure to a key member of Nato especially alarmed Washington because Mr Ecevit, a prickly left-wing nationalist, has more than once voiced unease over the American attacks, which are now an almost daily event, and because of the common stance of Turkey and Iraq on the ever explosive Kurdish question.

To an extent, Mr Ecevit allayed those fears yesterday. Notwithstanding a reference to "my old friend" Mr Aziz, he left no doubt that permission to use Incirlik would not be withdrawn. "The US and British pi-

BY RUPERT CORNWELL

lots open fire only to defend themselves," he said, though he noted that Turkey was monitoring matters closely and "with sensitivity".

That last phrase was, almost certainly, a reference to the great shared problem of Iraq and Turkey - the large Kurdish minorities in both countries pressing for a separate and independent Kurdish state - which could turn critical if American protection for the Kurds living in the northern no-fly zone inadvertently gives them the opportunity to break loose.

Any such attempt would almost inevitably fan the separatist Kurdish movement in Turkey, whose fugitive leader, Abdullah Ocalan, is regarded as a terrorist by Ankara, the US and most European governments, but who has a massive following among his people, both in Turkey and in exile communities in Europe.

Iraq's efforts in the north have been matched by verbal diatribes against Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, which host the bases from which British and American aircraft patrol the no-fly zone protecting the Shia Muslims in the south.

The aim is the same: to keep challenging the US and British flights, assert Iraq's sovereignty over its airspace, and hope that - as alleged incidents such as yesterday's pile up - the tide of international sympathy will turn in its favour.

The Baghdad authorities said five people were killed and 22 injured in a series of at-



Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz (left) and Turkish Prime Minister, Bulent Ecevit, in Ankara yesterday. Before the talks, Turkey made clear it is committed to letting US planes use its Incirlik base. US General Lloyd Newton (right) after visiting the mausoleum of Turkey's founder, Kemal Ataturk, in Ankara. PA/Reuters

tacks by US and British jets on civilian and military targets in the south. In Washington, a Pentagon spokesman said four sites had been hit, including a

missile base, two telecommunications facilities and an air defence site, while in London, a Ministry of Defence spokesman confirmed that RAF planes had

been involved, after violations by Iraq of the southern no-fly zone. As Mr Aziz made his fruitless mission, a high-level Pentagon delegation, led by

Air Force General Lloyd Newton, was in the Turkish capital, Ankara for talks, during which they paid symbolic tribute to

Kemal Ataturk, the founder of modern Turkey, whose mausoleum overlooks the capital. It was a pointed gesture, underlining how much Washington values its alliance with Turkey,

and also how much Turkey, deprived of \$30bn of trade thanks to the UN embargo against Iraq, needs its American connection.

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*Legal & General 'Value of a Mum' Survey 1996.



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*Paid out on first death. Examples based on a male non-smoker aged 30 and a female non-smoker aged 30. Acceptance subject to individual details

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IN BRIEF

Serbia condemns bombing threat
SERBIA BRUSHED aside the threat of air strikes and ruled out Nato's plan for a 30,000-strong peace-keeping force in Kosovo. President Milan Milutinovic warned that the bombing threatened by the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, on Sunday would be a "crime against humanity".

More tremors follow earthquake
AFGHANISTAN SAID further tremors jolted a region hit by an earthquake south of the capital, Kabul, and could have caused extra casualties. More than 30,000 people were affected by last week's quake, which killed at least 60 people in the Maidan Shahr area.

War crimes jury trip abroad a first
A BRITISH judge and jurors arrived in Belarus to tour the village of Domachevo where, more than 50 years ago, a Nazi collaborator, Anthony Sawoniuk, allegedly carried out genocidal killings of Jewish civilians. The trial of Mr Sawoniuk, 77, is Britain's first war crimes trial and marks the first time a British court will convene on foreign soil.

Chance to name that bird
A SOCIETY in Texas is auctioning off the rights to name a species of bird discovered in western Brazil. Bret Whitney discovered the bird but donated the right to name it to the Texas Audubon Society, which is holding an auction on 5 March.

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A demonstrator with a poster of the jailed journalist Gao Yu in 1995. Ms Gao has just been freed. Robyn Beck

Peking releases journalist early

IN A RARE demonstration of compassion, the Chinese government yesterday paroled its best-known female political prisoner, 56-year-old Gao Yu, just in time to welcome in the Year of the Rabbit with her family in Peking.

Ms Gao, a journalist, had spent more than five years in jail for allegedly revealing state secrets in articles she wrote, a charge she has always denied. "This is my happiest Spring Festival in 10 years," said Ms Gao's son, Zhao Meng, who added that his mother had been banned from talking to reporters under the terms of the parole. The Chinese New Year, known as Spring Festival, starts today and is a time when families traditionally gather together at home.

Ms Gao's arrest and imprisonment was one of the most vindictive actions of the

BY TERESA POOLE
in Peking

Chinese government. She was detained early in October 1993, just before she was due to take up a post at Columbia University in the United States. Rather than let her fulfil this dream, the authorities detained her, tried her in secret and handed down a harsh jail term. In 1995, Ms Gao was awarded the Golden Pen of Freedom prize by the Paris-based World Association of Newspapers, which was followed in 1997 by Unesco's annual press freedom award.

The reasons for paroling Ms Gao more than seven months before her sentence ends are probably threefold. Her jail term was due to finish on 1 October, when China plans lavish celebrations to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the found-

ing of the People's Republic, an event it would not want overshadowed by the release of a high-profile dissident. Second, Ms Gao was suffering health problems, including high blood pressure, heart disease and kidney problems. "Her health is not good," said her son.

Most pertinently, the release is ahead of next month's visit to Peking by Madeleine Albright, the United States Secretary of State, and the forthcoming Geneva meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Commission, where some Western countries are expected to press for closure of China's recent crackdown on dissidents.

For the government, the Year of the Rabbit presents difficult challenges. The economic outlook is uncertain, as can be seen by the subdued Chinese New Year shopping. Soaring unemployment and a general perception that this will be another difficult year for China's industrial sector have encouraged people to keep their money in their pockets.

The State Statistics Bureau announced yesterday that Chinese exports had declined 10.8 per cent in January, and retail prices fell 2.8 per cent. Amid this rather bleak backdrop, the best attempt to inject some seasonal cheer into society has been the decision by a handful of big cities to lift the ban on lighting firecrackers, the traditional way to banish unfriendly mythical beasts and ensure an auspicious start to the new year.

For Peking, stability is the

watchword this year. China's leaders want, above all else, no surprises.

A speech just published by the Communist Party chief of Peking, Jia Qingling, warned: "We must be on close guard constantly to crush infiltration, subversion and splits in the foreign and domestic enemy forces and we must pay attention to sensitive period duties, at all times remaining vigilant against hostile elements which may take advantage of contradictions to create incidents." That "sensitive period" is the upcoming 10th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square crackdown in Peking on 4 June 1989, when the army brutally fired on unarmed pro-democracy protesters.

The prime minister, Zhu Rongji, used his Chinese New Year address yesterday to reiterate the message. "Strengthen the rule of law and democracy, resolve internal conflict, crack down on all kinds of illegal activity and ensure political stability," he urged.

Despite already recently jailing China's few remaining leading dissidents, Peking is keeping up the pressure on renewed attempts by activists to launch the China Democracy Party and to quash any attempts to mark the events of 4 June.

At least two dissidents were detained for questioning over the weekend after the nascent opposition party applied for permission to hold a congress in the city of Wuhan next month.

Dam project dogged by corruption



The dam's reservoir will submerge 13 cities. AP

BY TERESA POOLE

BRIBERY and corruption are besetting China's Three Gorges Dam project, according to farmers who claim they are being cheated of government resettlement funds. In one township, peasants have resorted to petitioning the central government because of officials extorting fees and pocketing resettlement money.

Details of the petitions follow China's admission that, by the end of last year, prosecutors in Chongqing City, at the upstream end of the planned reservoir, had handled 95 Three Gorges-related cases, involving corruption, bribery and embezzlement of public funds. Most of the corrupt officials were in charge of the resettlement projects, or had access to construction funds.

Resettlement is the most sensitive issue involving the dam on the Yangtze river, scheduled to be finished in 2009, with more than 1.1 million people due to be moved. About 40 per cent of the dam's £160 total price-tag is earmarked for this resettlement, providing rich pickings for unscrupulous local officials. So far, 160,000 people have been relocated, according to official statistics.

Corruption is not the only problem facing China's biggest building site. At the end of last year, the Prime Minister, Zhu Rongji, announced during an inspection tour that China might invite foreign engineering companies to monitor the quality of construction. "Any carelessness will bring disaster to future generations and cause irretrievable losses," he said.

Wang Jiazhong, vice-president of the Three Gorges Project Development Corporation, was quoted in a state newspaper as saying: "Not all of the work completed is of top quality and a few defects have been reported." These included the weakness of

cement and substandard facilities in the ship lock.

A total of 632 square kilometres of land will be submerged, an expanse about the same as the Isle of Wight and 13 cities, 140 towns and 1,352 villages will disappear. In theory, all those affected are to get resettlement money and new land or jobs, but the reality is often very different.

Details of the petitions from angry farmers were released by International Rivers Network, an environmental lobby group that opposes the dam. The group said representatives of about 10,000 of the 15,329 people being moved from one riverside township submitted a petition to Peking in November 1997.

They said local officials were allotting only half of the 20,000 yuan (£1,500) per head compensation. A second petition was filed last May, followed by a third in August, with accusations that officials took bribes from people outside the dam area so they would be registered as relocated people, that they extorted fees from relocated people, and forced relocated people to buy new housing permits.

The accusations mirror reports from Qin Xinlian, the procurator-general of Chongqing. Speaking of abuses in other townships, he said: "They took bribes, made up fake people to be resettled, and skimmed from the reallocation fund." The sums taken ranged from 10,000 yuan (£750) to 200,000 yuan (£15,000). In Zhongdian County officials built a commercial property unrelated to their resettlement responsibilities, using £17,300 from the building fund.

Long before China started to admit corruption was a problem for the Three Gorges Dam, overseas anti-dam and human rights groups warned of the abuses going on. China previously always dismissed such reports as fabrications.

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Death by dragging trio go on trial

ON THE back of William King's head, just visible beneath his close-cropped hair, is a tattoo of a pentagram. The mark and its meaning will be at the centre of a highly charged United States murder trial, which opens today in the small Texas town of Jasper.

Mr King, with two other defendants, is charged with the murder of James Byrd, a black man who was dragged to death behind a car, with Mr King and others allegedly in it. Body parts were strewn along the quiet country road on the steamy night of 7 June last year.

It was a vile, grisly killing, but that was not the only reason it caught the public imagination. Mr King and his friends are alleged to have been linked to white supremacist gangs in prison and the killing may have been more than just an evil episode: it may have been the rallying cry for race war.

Mr King and one of the other defendants, Lawrence Brewer, shared a prison cell and were both members of a racist prison gang, the Confederate Knights of America, the prosecution will say. Mr King, while in jail, changed his religion from Baptist to Odinism, common among some of the far-right groups. He was tattooed with the pentagram and Ku-Klux-Klan (KKK) and Nazi symbols. He and Mr Brewer planned the killing as a warning to Jasper's black residents, and Mr King was trying to start a chapter of one of the far right groups, the court will be told.

According to the prosecution, Mr King, Mr Brewer and Shawn Berry set out that night to make a statement. The killing was not just a random, drunken event, but akin to the

BY ANDREW MARSHALL

lynchings that plagued the US within living memory. One of the other tattoos on Mr King is the image of a black man hanging from a tree. The body was left by the town cemetery.

Think of Texas and you probably think of oil rigs or jangling spurs. But this part of east Texas, just west of the Red River valley, is wooded and studded with lakes and rivers, far from the big urban centres or the open plains. This is the poor, underdeveloped south. Parts have been fertile territory for the far right for years, and several KKK groups used the Byrd killing as the occasion for a rally in Jasper's pretty little courthouse square.

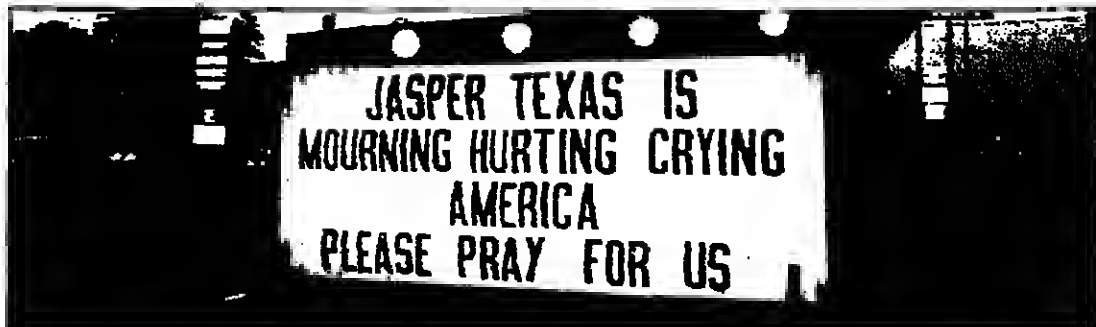
Now, they would not get near it. Such displays are banned within two blocks. There are metal detectors and surveillance cameras at the courthouse. The town has been once again submerged by national media, as it was last year.

Jasper itself was traumatised by the killing. Many residents - white residents - said it was not a racist town, that the mayor was black and there was no tension. Black residents disagreed. The cemetery itself was segregated, they said. Since then, Jasper has made itself a model for reconciliation, the cemetery is desegregated and this small town deep in the pines has been praised in newspaper editorials across the country.

Mr King has displayed erratic behaviour since his arrest, threatening his captors, saying he would commit suicide and sometimes refusing to turn up for hearings. "I don't know why you are eager



The victim, James Byrd (left) towed to his death in Jasper, Texas, on 7 June. The accused (top, from left): Shawn Berry, Lawrence Brewer and William King



to condemn me for this man's murder," he wrote in a letter to the local Jasper *Newsboy*. "I am simply a victim of a judicial conspiracy as well as the district attorney's personal animosity for a non-Christian

ex-convict who is adorned with skin art mildly offensive to his and Jasperites' religious beliefs."

What remains is to try him. He is charged with capital murder: if found guilty, he and the

others may be executed by lethal injection. It is only the second capital murder case in Jasper County in 50 years, and everyone in this small town knows everyone else.

His lawyers applied to take

the case elsewhere, but that was turned down. The jury has been chosen, and it will not be all-white: there will be at least one black member. The judge, Joe Bob Golden, has won plaudits from all sides for his calm,

relaxed handling of an incendiary case, as has the town sheriff, Billy Rowles.

However, after Mr Byrd's burial, his headstone was removed. Jasper has tried desperately hard to do the right

thing, and there is enormous will in the town to survive this awful killing. But Mr Byrd is still dead, and there are still people in east Texas who want to use the case for their own racist motives.

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Refuseniks ask Microsoft for a refund

HUNDREDS of computer users were converging on the offices of the most powerful software company in the world yesterday to demand a refund over its Windows operating system. They said they did not want the Microsoft package and they objected to it coming ready-installed on almost all personal computers.

The so-called "world refund day" was organised by fans of Linux, an alternative operating system that is freely available for downloading on the Internet.

"The message is not, 'Windows sucks, I want my money back'. The message is, 'I choose not to accept this licence and am therefore exercising my right to return the product for a refund'," the organisers explained.

Fans of Linux and other operating systems argue that Microsoft's own rules permit them to refuse the company's products, but in practice it is almost impossible to do so.

BY ANDREW GUMBEL
in Los Angeles

Geoffrey Bennett, an Australian, spent four months exchanging e-mails with Microsoft and Toshiba, the manufacturer of his personal computer. As with almost every other computer maker, it "bundles" Windows into the software package included on its machines. Mr Bennett refused to sign his user's licensing agreement with Microsoft and pointed to a clause in the fine print stating that he was entitled to a refund.

Microsoft said he had to seek his refund from Toshiba, and Toshiba said he had to seek his refund from Microsoft. After much toing and froing, he was sent 110 Australian dollars (£45) from Toshiba.

Protesters were due to converge at Microsoft's offices in Foster City, south of San Francisco, Orange County and Santa Monica in the Los Angeles area, and in New York City.

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Ex-dictator tops poll in Nigeria

NIGERIA MOVED a step closer yesterday to choosing the civilian president who could lead the country to democracy.

In primaries held ahead of presidential elections on 27 February General Olusegun Obasanjo, a former military ruler, emerged as a strong front-runner when he was chosen as the candidate of the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

At the weekend primary of the PDP in the central city of Jos, Mr Obasanjo, who was unelected last time he ruled Nigeria in the late 1970s, defeated Alex Ekwueme, a former civilian state president from the east of the country.

General Obasanjo won 68 per cent of votes from 2,439 delegates. "My joy knows no bounds. I will devote all my energy and all the powers awarded to me to the service of Nigeria and humanity," said

By ALEX DUVAL SMITH
Africa Correspondent

the 61-year-old former political prisoner and, latterly, farmer.

In the 12 days remaining before Africa's most populous country chooses a civilian president, he faces challengers from two other parties, the All People's Party (APP) and the Alliance for Democracy (AD).

There was fist-fighting at the APP's primary in Kaduna this weekend, and the two bodies are not likely to threaten General Obasanjo. They have plans for a pact but so far this has not been approved by the Independent National Electoral Commission.

Under the pact, the APP's candidate, Oghonnaya Onu, a former governor of Abia state in south-east Nigeria, must

oow defeat Olu Falae, a former finance minister who is the AD's candidate. Dr Onu would then represent both parties.

The campaign to date has centred not on crucial issues, such as how Nigeria might be saved from its worst economic slump since independence from Britain in 1960, but on regional differences.

General Obasanjo, from the southern-based Yoruba ethnic group, is famous for having been the only military dictator to have handed power to a civilian leader. In 1978, when his position was threatened by rifts in the military, he saved face by handing power to a government in which Mr Ekwueme served.

He was imprisoned for allegedly plotting the overthrow of General Sani Abacha, the dictator who died last June. His release that month was one of the first gestures of General Abdulsalam Abubakar, the new

head of state, who produced the programme now under way for a transition to democracy.

Despite his record and the fact that General Obasanjo was a southerner in a northern-dominated military, he continues to be viewed with suspicion by fellow Yorubas whose power-base is the country's gigantic economic capital, Lagos. They consider him a traitor and claim many of the military figures who have governed Nigeria for all but 10 years of its independence are financing his campaign in return for immunity from prosecution for pocketing the country's wealth.

But Nigeria, which derives 85 per cent of its export earnings from oil, is also aware that General Obasanjo is the favoured candidate of investors. With the oil price currently at rock bottom and the country still excluded from the



Nigeria's former military ruler, General Olusegun Obasanjo (right) with politician friend Sule Onabiyi. Reuters

Commonwealth and much world trade because of the brutal policies of General Abacha, the country needs confident investors.

Despite an issues-lean cam-

paign, General Obasanjo has impressed democracy campaigners by agreeing to consider passing more power to the regions and reforming Nigeria's federal structure. Many people

argue that until government and military are decentralised, the threat of coups will continue to dominate policy-making.

How Lagos votes will be crucial to the outcome of the

presidential election as well as that of the parliamentary poll on Saturday. Equally important will be the vote in the east, an area scarred by the Biafran war for independence in the 1960s.

Four killed in St Valentine's Day bombings

BY CLIFF TAYLOR
in Kampala

TWO POWERFUL bomb blasts ripped through a bar and a shop in a popular Kampala entertainment district crowded with St Valentine's Day revellers, killing four people and seriously injuring more than 35.

The synchronised attacks, calculated to cause maximum casualties, were launched on Sunday in the Kabalagala district, which is frequented by foreign expatriates and aid workers, as well as Ugandans.

The first bomb exploded at 9.30pm, devastating the open-air Telex bar. Plastic tables and chairs were torn apart and one person was impaled by an aluminium umbrella pole.

Five minutes later, a second bomb exploded outside a small supermarket next door. Three people were reportedly killed instantly and many others critically injured. Street vendors

and passers-by were maimed by flying debris.

The bombings appear to mark a resumption of the violent campaign that rocked the Ugandan capital last year, in which around 26 people died in a series of explosions at bars and restaurants.

The supposedly Islamic fundamentalist Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a rebel group based in western Uganda, was blamed. If Sunday's bombings are found to be linked to the ADF, it could seriously undermine the government's pretext for invading the Republic of Congo last year. President Yoweri Museveni has consistently claimed his forces are only in the Congo to weed out and crush the ADF rebels.

At ease with Rachmaninov

STREET LIFE

SAMOTECHNY LANE, MOSCOW

VITALY WENT looking for a new apartment last week for himself and his "big, demanding girl". Since the latest economic crisis, housing prices have fallen in Moscow.

Vitaly reckoned he could find a flat that would be better value than the Khrushchev-era box for which he has been paying \$350 (£221) rent per month.

The neighbours in his suburb of Khimki were growing increasingly intolerant of Vitaly, who is a concert pianist. "I understand that listening to the same passage of Rachmaninov 100 times a day might drive you crazy," he said. "On the other hand, I listen to them getting drunk and fighting and throwing furniture at each other."

He was preparing to move with his "girl", a temperamental grand piano.

He decided against using the real estate agencies, whose sharks have been known to murder elderly Muscovites for their flats and who, at the very least, were likely to take an exorbitant fixing fee. He turned to his network of friends and acquaintances.

Folina, an opera singer, came up with what seemed an interesting option. There was a one-room flat going for \$200 a month, right next door to her in the green and desirable Yuzopadnaya district of the city. The owners had rented it out previously through an agency, only to find two call girls had set up a brothel there. They would be delighted to have a respectable friend of a friend. In addition, the building had a goods lift, so it would be no problem to carry up Vitaly's piano to the 14th floor.

The third flat we looked at, in the working-class district of Kuzminki, was nearly perfect. The entrance hall smelled like a stable but the two rooms were clean, light and airy and it would not be too Herculean a task for workmen to carry up the piano to the fourth floor.

Best of all, the new place cost only \$130, all of \$200 less than he was paying.

Vitaly enjoyed telling his old landlady to seek a new tenant for her overpriced box. Now he is having his piano tuned after the move and hoping that the residents of Kuzminki will appreciate Rachmaninov.

HELEN WOMACK

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BUSINESS

BRIEFING

France agrees defence supergroup

THE FRENCH government said it had agreed terms for a merger between the state-owned aerospace company Aérospatiale and the Matra defence unit of the Lagardere group, in a deal which will create a French powerhouse in the defence industry. Lagardere will pay up to Fr2bn (220m) for 33 per cent of the Aérospatiale-Matra group. The French state's holding in the new group will fall below 50 per cent after a flotation later this year.

The deal follows last month's link-up between the UK defence group British Aerospace and General Electric's Marconi division. Analysts predicted that the new French group would seek out European partners.

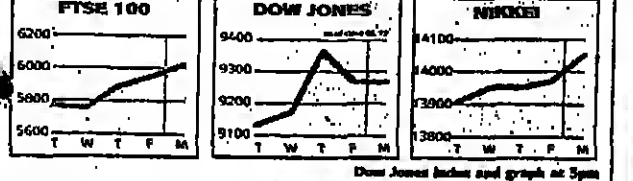
Lafontaine steps up rate pressure

OSKAR LAFONTAINE, the German finance minister (pictured), will step up his pressure on the European Central Bank to cut interest rates by attending Thursday's meeting of the governing council. He has the right to attend as chairman of the EU's council of finance ministers, although not the right to vote on the rate decision. Mr Lafontaine recently suggested that if the ECB did not cut rates, governments would have to relax fiscal policies.

FKI quashes takeover bid rumours

FKI, the engineering and hardware group, yesterday moved to quash rumours of a takeover bid when it denied that Jeff Whalley, its chairman, was preparing a management buyout and said it was "not in talks with any third party concerning any material transaction". However, FKI admitted it had been considering acquisitions and disposals to enhance shareholder value. Reports have suggested that Mr Whalley, who recently gave up his executive responsibilities, had approached the board about taking FKI private. Ingersoll-Rand of the US has been seen as a potential bidder. FKI shares dropped 8p to 150.5p.

STOCK MARKETS



Index	Close	Change	Change %	52 wk High	52 wk Low	Yield %
FTSE 100	6023.20	+22.50	1.22	6195.60	4399.20	2.65
FTSE 250	5177.20	-10.50	-0.20	5970.90	4247.60	3.21
FTSE 350	2856.60	-28.10	-0.99	2969.10	2210.40	2.74
FTSE All Share	2761.57	-26.16	-0.96	2886.52	2143.53	2.78
FTSE SmallCap	2240.60	-3.60	-0.16	2799.80	1834.40	3.61
FTSE Pledg'd	1228.00	-5.20	-0.43	1517.10	1046.20	4.41
FTSE AM	827.50	-0.50	-0.06	1466.90	961.30	1.21
FTSE Europe 100	2754.60	-24.51	-0.90	3079.27	2018.15	3.16
FTSE Europe 300	1201.04	-8.14	-0.68	1332.07	890.63	1.92
Dow Jones	9177.20	-10.50	-0.20	9647.96	7400.30	1.66
Nikkei	2856.60	-28.10	-0.99	3232.35	1787.90	1.03
Hang Seng	9402.39	-23.03	-0.24	11926.16	6544.79	3.73
Dax	4879.55	-9.19	-0.19	6217.83	3833.71	1.75
S&P 500	1230.13	-23.91	-1.91	1283.64	924.53	1.29
Nasdaq	2219.09	-43.66	-1.96	2432.44	1392.09	0.36
Eurosto 300	6421.30	-11.89	-0.19	7837.20	5320.90	1.62
Brazil Bovespa	8952.30	-37.83	-0.42	12339.14	4575.69	6.52
Belgium Be120	3408.03	18.77	0.55	3713.21	2644.70	2.08
Amsterdam Eex	523.31	-0.02	0.00	600.65	366.58	1.88
France CAC 40	4065.19	-4.83	-0.12	4404.94	2881.21	1.99
Milan MIB30	3434.00	-494.00	-1.46	3917.00	24175.00	1.19
Madrid Iber 35	9901.10	161.07	1.66	10388.80	6869.90	1.88
Tel Aviv	5235.76	-15.57	-0.30	5581.20	3232.57	1.49
Korea Comp	351.22	0.00	0.00	651.95	272.57	0.06
Australia ASX	2877.80	-11.70	-0.41	2948.70	2366.70	3.19

INTEREST RATES



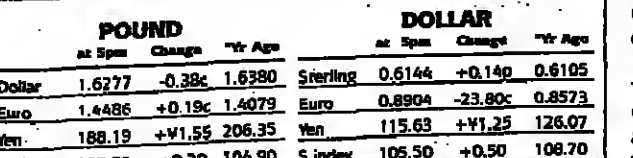
MONEY MARKET RATES

Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	10 year	15 year	Long bond	Yr chg
UK	5.44	-2.07	5.25	-2.20	4.45	-1.49	4.43
US	5.00	-0.63	5.25	-0.44	5.06	0.42	5.43
Japan	0.36	-0.48	0.39	-0.44	2.25	0.28	3.39
Germany	3.10	-0.41	3.04	-0.73	3.91	-1.08	4.86

BOND YIELDS

Index	3 month	6 month	1 year	10 year	15 year	Long bond	Yr chg
UK	5.44	-2.07	5.25	-2.20	4.45	-1.49	4.43
US	5.00	-0.63	5.25	-0.44	5.06	0.42	5.43
Japan	0.36	-0.48	0.39	-0.44	2.25	0.28	3.39
Germany	3.10	-0.41	3.04	-0.73	3.91	-1.08	4.86

CURRENCIES



OTHER INDICATORS

Index	Close	Chg	Yr Ago	Index	Close	Chg	Yr Ago
Brent Oil (\$)	0.00	-10.18	14.84	GDP 115.40	3.00	112.04	Mar
Gold (\$)	289.50	1.80	299.85	RPI 164.40	2.80	159.92	Feb
Silver (\$)	5.75	0.11	7.08	Base Rates	5.50	7.25	Oct 98

TOURIST RATES

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
Australia (\$)	2.4250	Mexico (nuevo peso)	14.90
Austria (schillings)	19.28	Netherlands (guilder)	3.0897
Belgium (francs)	56.69	New Zealand (\$)	2.8544
Canada (\$)	2.3700	Norway (kroner)	12.11
Denmark (kroner)	0.8118	Portugal (escudos)	279.93
Finland (markka)	10.49	Saudi Arabia (rials)	5.9420
France (francs)	8.3681	Singapore (\$)	2.6268
Germany (marks)	9.2107	South Africa (rand)	9.5399
Greece (drachmas)	2.7566	Spain (pesetas)	233.33
Hong Kong (\$)	452.95	Sweden (kronor)	12.55
Ireland (pounds)	1.1033	Switzerland (francs)	2.2515
India (rupees)	62.19	Thailand (bahts)	54.56
Israel (shekels)	6.1434	Turkey (liras)	537.65
Italy (lire)	2729	USA (\$)	1.5930
Japan (yen)	182.37		
Malaysia (ringgits)	5.9421		
Malta (lira)	0.6093		

Biotech plunges 17% as cancer drug fails

BRITISH BIOTECH yesterday added another chapter to its disastrous history when it revealed that its star anti-cancer drug had failed a key clinical trial.

Shares in the beleaguered drug company plunged over 17 per cent to an all-time low of 21.5p after it admitted that Marimastat, one of its most advanced compounds, did not work in the treatment of pancreatic tumours.

Industry experts said the result cast doubts over Marimastat's efficacy and could jeopardise a major part of British Biotech's clinical programme.

The failure of the 400-patient test is a huge blow for the company as it had been predicted over 15 months ago by Andrew Millar, the group's former head of clinical trials.

Mr Millar was sacked in April for looking at confidential data in the trial - a procedure known as "unblinding" - and for expressing concerns to shareholders over the efficacy of marimastat and the anti-pancreatic compound Zalcitabine.

The affair sparked a bitter row between Mr Millar and the board, which caused a collapse in the share price from its peak of over £3 and led to the departure of the chief executive, Keith McCullagh.

Mr Millar yesterday said: "We knew this in December 1997. I feel terribly sorry that the right management of a potential new drug was not undertaken."

The new chief executive, Eliot Goldstein, yesterday said that the study's negative results did not spell the end of Marimastat.

He said the test showed that the drug had failed its target of a 16 per cent reduction in death rates compared with an existing drug. However, he said pancreatic cancer was one of the most difficult cancers to treat and that further studies were needed to assess Marimastat's efficacy.

British Biotech was spending around half of its £24m development budget to trial the drug on different forms of cancer in nine other studies and results were expected over the next 12 months. "We are not deciding to quit. The plan is to bring the nine studies to their end," Dr Goldstein said.

Peder Jensen, the development director, denied that the failure of the trials vindicated Dr Millar's actions. He said that when Dr Millar unblinded the study, he could not have predicted the outcome because the data was too scant. "He just happened to be right," Mr Jensen said.

Mr Millar, who is embroiled in a legal case with the company set to be heard in the High Court later this year, rejected the suggestion. "It is a virtual mathematical certainty that this was to happen".

He predicted that the other study he unblinded, a key trial for Zalcitabine, was also set to fail. The company said it would report on the trial before the end of next month.

City analysts said the result of the trial would prompt investors to reduce their estimates of Marimastat's future earnings. The drug was once hailed as a potential blockbuster with estimated sales of over \$1bn a year.

However, a series of setbacks has prompted experts to revise sales predictions to \$200m.

Warburg Pincus in \$650m mutual fund sale

BY ANDREW GARFIELD, Financial Editor

WARBURG PINCUS, the venture capital firm, is retrenching back to its core private equity business with a \$650m deal to sell its mutual fund operations to Swiss banking group Credit Suisse.

The Swiss are also buying a 19.9 per cent stake in the firm's private equity business, although the chairman and chief executive, Lionel Pincus, insisted it will still be "owned and managed by its partners".

Warburg Pincus - an original investor alongside United News & Media and Pearson in Channel Five television - has been aggressively targeting Britain for expansion. It has funded a string of UK public-to-private deals, including last week's buyout of software group Rebus. Proceeds of yesterday's deal will be split between the firm's partners.

Warburg Pincus denied that the firm was in financial difficulty or under any pressure to sell. The mutual fund management business grew up as a result of Warburg Pincus's strong relationships with wealthy individuals but was not integral to main activities, the firm said.

Mr Pincus said the business, which signed a marketing agreement with Credit Suisse last year, had reached the point where being part of a larger group was necessary. "This linkage combines our strengths in the US with those of Credit Suisse Group around the world, in line with our belief that scale and global reach are critical strategic requirements for financial services firms," he said.

Warburg Pincus Asset Management employs 260 people and manages \$22bn of assets. The deal will boost Credit Suisse's funds under management to more than \$230bn.

It leaves Warburg Pincus with a rather smaller operation made up of 61 professionals, of which 10 are employed in London, \$7bn in private equity, and a further \$5bn of committed capital available for investment.

Bill Priest, chief executive of Credit Suisse Asset Management Americas, said the business was a very good fit. "We have been determined to increase both our retail and institutional distribution in the US. We also wanted to expand our business with high net worth individuals. This helps with all three."



British soldiers training on a tank firing range in Germany. The Ministry of Defence has slashed munitions orders from Royal Ordnance

BAe warns Royal Ordnance staff of job cuts

THOUSANDS REPRESENTING thousands of Royal Ordnance workers were yesterday warned that pay could be frozen or even cut because of falling orders.

Company officials told unions that the munitions manufacturer was suffering "huge losses".

Jack Dromey, at the Transport and General Workers' Union, said British Aerospace had warned that its Ordnance unit was facing the worst crisis in its history.

"The company has threatened both a pay freeze for next year and the possibility of pay cuts this year," he said.

Mr Dromey said unions representing RO's 4,000 workers were calling on BAe to back its loss-making subsidiary, and on the Government to intervene.

"Our defence ministers are not backing our ordnance factories in the same way as our European competitors," he said.

BAe has been discussing the possibility of a joint venture with RO with German firm Rheinmetall, but nothing has been agreed.

City takes fright at £23m Booker charge

BOOKER, the debt-laden cash-and-carry business, is cutting 600 jobs and taking an exceptional charge of £23m as part of a deal to sell its food distribution division. The company is selling Booker Wholesale Foods (BWF) to food wholesaler Palmer & Harvey for a knock-down £4.4m as it strives to reduce its £650m debt mountain.

The jobs will be lost at the division's head office and call centre in Northampton, which are being closed, as well as at the frozen food operations in Hartfield, Haydock and Bristol.

More job losses are expected at Booker as the group is restructured under Stuart Rose, who joined as chief executive late last year. The company has announced more than 200 other job cuts in the past few months.

There was further bad news in the sector yesterday when Hazlewood Foods, the chilled foods group, announced 250 job cuts after a decision to stop meat and delicatessen manufacturing at its loss-making plant in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire.

Mr Rose said the sale of BWF, which distributes food orders to corner shops and independent retailers, was needed to reduce debt and trim the business to its core chain of 181 cash-and-carry centres. BWF recorded losses of £1m on sales of £225m last year.

Also for sale is Booker Food Service, the catering supplies division that services clients such as Burger King, hospitals and the armed forces.

Commenting on the plan to revitalise Booker, Mr Rose said: "If it doesn't work then I'm out of a job. But I've appointed one new director, another is joining next month and I'll be beefing up the management elsewhere in the business."

Booker shares fell 7.5p to 64.5p on the news. Analysts said the market took fright at the exceptional cost, one noting there was "quite a lot of pain to come" before the company completed its transformation.

The shares plunged last year on three profit warnings and abortive merger talks with Somerfield and Budegens.

Treasury to launch £8bn efficiency drive

THE TREASURY has announced a new and ambitious £8bn Whitehall efficiency drive led by Alan Milburn, Chief Secretary to the Treasury.

A team of high-profile advisers from the private sector includes Clare Spottiswoode, the former gas industry watchdog, Andrew Foster, controller of the Audit Commission, and Dame Sheila Masters of KPMG, as well as Lords Simon and Sainsbury.

The new Public Services Productivity Panel met the Prime Minister yesterday to kick off its discussions on how to ensure that the Government could deliver the modernisation of public services.

It will monitor progress in achieving 500 departmental efficiency targets such as reductions in class sizes and hospital waiting lists.

The Treasury has pledged that every pound saved can be reinvested in public services rather than being clawed back into the Government's coffers.

Many departments are expected to make productivity improvements of 2 to 3 per cent a year, adding up to £8bn by 2001/02. That compares to planned departmental spending of just over £200bn in that year.

Last summer's Comprehensive Spending Review signalled the Government's determination to improve public sector efficiency. It emphasised that services would be provided by the private sector where that was more efficient.

In a separate move, the Treasury is likely to publish recommendations for the partial privatisation of statistics-gathering today.

Patricia Hewitt, Economic Secretary, will allow a few days for responses to a report from KPMG, the management consultancy, which urges the use of private companies for the collection of data on the economy.

The Treasury is also expected to make an announcement on the outcome of consultations on last year's statistics White Paper before long. It set out four options for meeting the Government's manifesto pledge to create an independent statistical agency.

AROUND THE WORLD'S MARKETS

LONDON

HOPES OF upbeat trading reports from the blue chip companies due to report this week helped Footsie score a 72.5 points gain to 6,023.2. With New York closed, trading volume was the lowest since early this year.

Barclays, reporting today, jumped 74p to 1,590p, and WPP due to present results tomorrow, rose 20p to 492p. BT continued to benefit from last week's trading news, surging a further 27.5p to a 1,072p peak.

Derek Pahn, page 19

TOKYO

THE JAPANESE government's plans to recapitalise 15 commercial banks and inject the equivalent of \$65bn to help them write off bad debts had more effect on the Tokyo market than the Bank of Japan's move last week to ease credit.

Bank shares led the way as the Nikkei 225 index rose 0.5 per cent to 75.50 to 14,049.19.

The banking sub-index gained over 1 per cent, while a shipping stock, Nippon Yusen, rose 30 yen to 379 yen.

HONG KONG

THE HANG SENG index closed 23.03 lower at 9,402.39 after a half-day session ahead of the Chinese Lunar New Year. Market sentiment reversed after last Friday's leap, which followed the decision by the Bank of Japan to cut interest rates.

The government decision late last Friday to resume land sales after a nine-month moratorium helped property stocks gain just over 0.5 per cent, led by Cheung Kong and Henderson Land. Bank shares were subdued by worries about rising bad debt levels.

FRANKFURT

SHARES closed slightly lower, with the Xetra DAX down 7.79 points at 4,888.95, but well above the day's low point of 4,807.39.

Banking stocks fell, with Deutsche Bank down 0.39 euros at 46.76. BMW rose 21.70 euros to 745.70 on bid hopes. DaimlerChrysler gained 1 to 85 euros after it said that a decision on a link with Nissan would be made soon. Thyssen and Mannesmann fell as the metalworkers' union in Baden-Wuerttemberg voted for a strike ballot.

MILAN

SHARES EDGED higher at the close in Milan with the help of late bargain-hunting. Banca Intesa was the best performer, gaining 0.39 to 5.50 euros on talk of a merger with Unicredit Italiano, which gained 0.13 to 4.67 euros, after the controlling shareholders indicated plans to reduce their stake.

Telecom Italia rose 0.11 to 8.49 euros after falling on reports that it had suspended plans to sell its pay-TV unit to News Corp. Fiat and Firelli gained ground on hopes of links with overseas partners.

How wage inflation has been tamed

News Analysis: Two factors – the New Deal work scheme and low price rises – have helped to draw the sting from pay expectations

EIGHT MONTHS ago the Bank of England was so concerned about inflationary pressures in the labour market that it hiked UK interest rates up to 7.5 per cent. Unemployment was unsustainably low, the Bank said, and would have to rise in order to keep inflation in check.

Since that shock rate rise last June, unemployment has fallen further and employment has risen. Official figures out tomorrow are expected to show unemployment staying close to 30-year lows. Despite this, the Bank felt comfortable cutting interest rates half a point to 5.5 per cent this month and leaving the door open for further cuts in last week's quarterly inflation report. So why isn't the Bank worried about wage inflation any more?

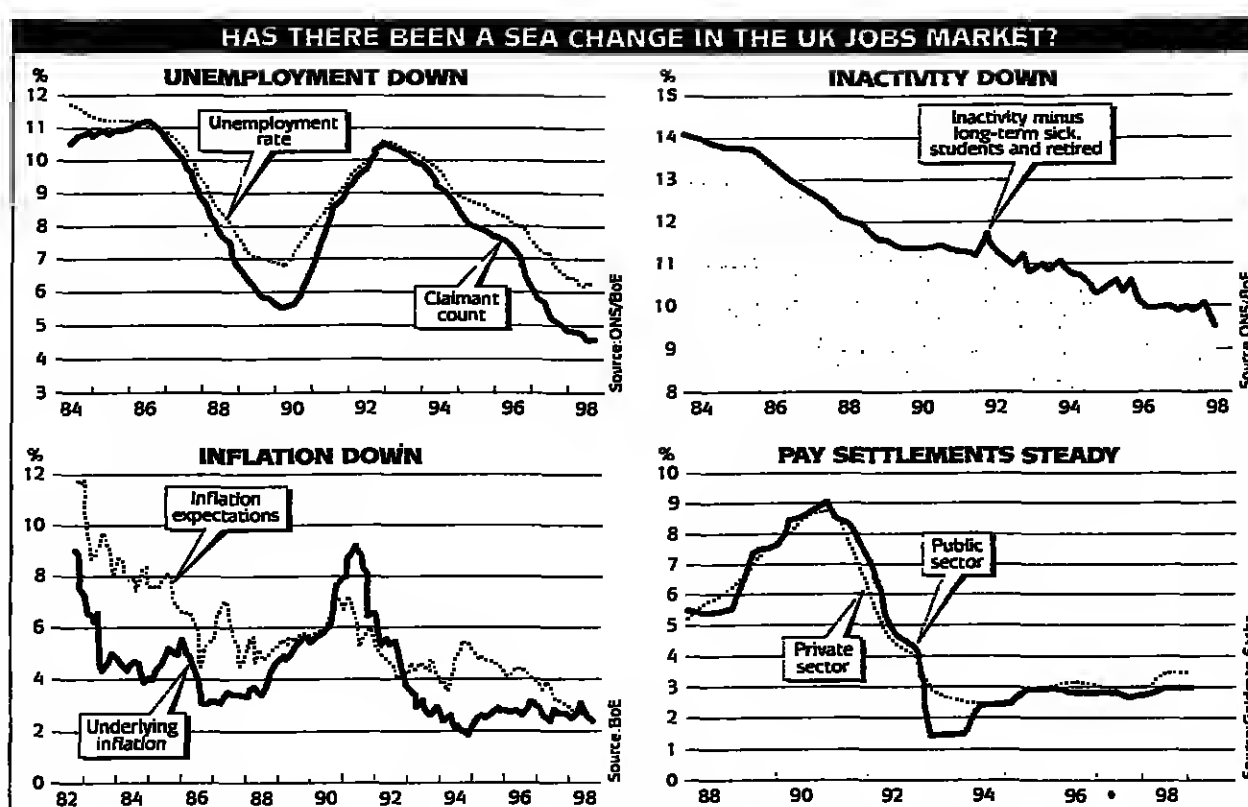
Part of the answer is that deflationary pressures from other sources – falling factory gate and commodity prices – have outweighed concerns about inflationary pressures in the labour market. Another is that some information the Bank based its decision on in June – the official average earnings index – turned out to be questionable. In particular, the worryingly sharp rise in earnings in the first half of the year was revised away in the autumn when the Office for National Statistics issued new numbers.

BY LEA PATERSON

A third reason for the Bank's apparent lack of concern about developments in the labour market is that unemployment is a so-called "lagging" indicator – it takes time for a drop in growth to impact on jobs. So, although the backward-looking official data may still be painting an upbeat picture, things may not stay rosy in coming months.

Indeed, all the forward-looking studies of employment intentions – such as the British Chambers of Commerce survey – suggest that unemployment will rise in the next 12 months. "The fact that we haven't seen an increase in unemployment so far shouldn't make people too sanguine," said John Philpott, director of the Employment Policy Institute. And, although official earnings data have been suspended in the wake of the confusion over the revisions, surveys suggest that wage inflation may be moderating as employers tighten belts and prepare for tough times ahead. Analysts at Goldman Sachs say: "On the partial information available, there appears to have been a stabilisation in pay deals in 1999 at around the 4 per cent level recorded last year."

A growing body of economists, however, believe there is



a fourth, perhaps more significant, reason for the dwindling concerns about developments in the labour market. In recent months there have been tentative signs of fundamental changes in the jobs market that may mean the UK is less prone to periods of high wage inflation and high unemployment than it has been.

In particular, there has been evidence both of the positive impact of the Government's

New Deal and of a change in expectations about future inflation – a key determinant of wage increases.

Take the New Deal first. Although it is early days for the government's scheme, the initial signs are encouraging. The Employment Policy Institute's regular survey of employment trends – the latest issue of which is published tomorrow – finds that unemployment has "undoubtedly been affected by

various government initiatives". Dr Philpott noted that the number of long-term unemployed in the 18 to 21 age group – a group specifically targeted by the New Deal – fell by 25 per cent between January and October last year. Data on inactivity is also encouraging. There has been a steady decline in the rate of inactivity – that is, the proportion of people who do not want a job.

Although it is difficult to dis-

entangle the impact of government initiatives on the labour markets from other factors, most experts seem agreed that initial indications are good. According to Dr Philpott, government initiatives should "increase the effectiveness" of the UK's labour pool. He said: "That means there is less likelihood of inflationary pressures in the labour market. Assuming government policy continues to move in the right direction, we

should see the sustainable rate of unemployment fall."

Falling inflation expectations also indicate that there may have been structural shifts in the UK labour market. Expectations about low inflation tomorrow tend to mean lower levels of wage inflation today. Employees are more likely to accept low wage increases if they believe the cost of living has stabilised.

So why have inflation expectations fallen? This is in large part due to the decision to grant the Bank of England independence. People have doubts about the ability of politicians to stick to tight inflation targets, but the independent Monetary Policy Committee has established itself in most people's minds as being a tough inflation fighter. Another factor may be the growing belief that the UK will join European monetary union – Europe's inflation track record has been better.

Looking ahead, however, things may become a little more difficult. British business, quite understandably, is concerned about the administrative burden of new measures such as the Working Families Tax Credit and the European Working Time Directive. There are also worries that the National Minimum Wage – although perhaps desirable on social grounds – may undermine labour market flexibility. So far, government reforms, both of incentives to work and in monetary policy, do seem to have had a positive impact in the jobs market. The challenge now is to keep the momentum going.

Microsoft could be split up, say US reports

BY ANDREW MARSHALL
in Washington

MICROSOFT COULD be broken up in a settlement of the massive competition case brought against it by the government, reports in the US said yesterday.

The case centres on Microsoft's allegedly illegal business practices to discourage competition, and the way it used its dominance of the operating system market to gain competitive edge in the market for Internet browsers.

Microsoft argues it did nothing illegal, and that its business practices were normal and fair competition. The trial in Washington has been going for four months so far.

Although the US Justice Department has discouraged speculation about the outcome, one possibility would be to divide the company into two or three, the Washington Post reported. This could have huge implications for the software market.

Under one solution, the company's Windows operating system, the most common operating system for personal users, could be made a separate company. Under another, Windows might be hared among several companies.

"Speculation about what the department might do if the court rules in our favour is premature and inappropriate," said a Justice Department spokesman.

Another possibility is the company could be forced to stop certain business practices, and required to licence key technologies, such as Windows to competitors.

Microsoft is halfway through its defence, which is not thought to have gone as well as the company might have hoped.

"Most observers believe the odds are high that the judge will rule against Microsoft," the Post reported.

Canary Wharf tipped for £2bn flotation this spring

THE OWNERS of Canary Wharf, the 36-acre development in London's Docklands, are considering an initial public offering (IPO) this spring which would allow an exit for some of their biggest investors and provide finance for building the last two-thirds of the project.

Despite over a month's ru-

BY JOHN WILLCOCK

mours in the City that a float before Easter is in the offing, Canary Wharf insisted yesterday that "no decision about an IPO has been taken".

Analysts expect a float to value the existing business at £1.5bn to £2bn, although the

completed project will be worth far more than that.

Around 4.7 million sq ft of office, restaurant and retail space has been built, with over 99 per cent of it let. Another 2.4 million sq ft of offices and shops is under construction, including a £500m head office for HSBC, which will house all the bank's 7,000 head

office staff. This still leaves space and planning permission for another 6.5m sq ft, which could take Canary Wharf's market value up to £10bn, according to analysts' estimates.

Canary Wharf is, however, continuing the tradition of its founder and current manager, Paul Reichmann, of utmost se-

crecy. The development was repossessed by its bankers in the early 1990s and then bought by a new group of investors put together by Mr Reichmann for around £800m. Mr Reichmann is understood to hold less than 10 per cent of the equity.

Those investors include Prince Al-Waleed bin Talal, CNA

Financial Corporation, Franklin Mutual Series Fund and businesses associated with Republic New York Corporation.

Any float would be aimed at enabling these investors to exit if they wanted, rather than at raising new funds for the development. Canary Wharf is advised by Morgan Stanley Dean Witter,

Credit Suisse First Boston and Cazenove. The company retains two property advisers, Richard Ellis and Knight Frank.

Any plans to float Canary Wharf face a big hurdle: the commercial property market is already in recession, and this has hammered share prices in the sector.

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In the March issue:

James Brown the living Soul legend talks about his life and music

Pamela Anderson talks about her new TV show VIP

Kelly Brook the new big breakfast presenter talks about getting up for work

Leeds United young players get an airing

PLUS: Elvis imitators, Elephant Polo and Stunt Girls

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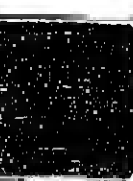


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THE INDEPENDENT

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Greenalls fever strikes – yet again

CAN IT really be time to dust down one of the stock market's most bewhiskered takeover candidates? Step forward Greenalls, the pubs and hotels group that has been linked with so many potential predators over the years that one almost loses count. Bid talk on this company goes back to the 1960s at the very least.

This time the potential suitor is supposed to be Whitbread with a £1.2bn bid at 400p per share. And the market has got itself in such a fervour of bid expectancy at the moment that Greenalls shares, not known for their sprightly behaviour, frothed up almost 11 per cent higher yesterday to 378.5p.

As ever, Greenalls is certainly a potential target. Its shares have underperformed the market by 50 per cent over the last five years. And Greenalls has done much of its own dirty work by getting out of brewing and, more recently, flogging its tenanted pub estate to Nomura for £370m. What is left is a much more attractive core of managed pubs, a fledgling health club business and,



OUTLOOK

most importantly the De Vere hotels chain.

It is De Vere that is the key. Led-broke's £1.2bn takeover of Stakis last week has underlined the value in the hotel sector, and the pub market is in the process of a major consolidation. De Vere would certainly fit Whitbread's strategy. It wants to beef up its leisure operations and De Vere would combine nicely with Whitbread's Marriott chain while Greenalls' fledgling Greens health club operation would dovetail with Whitbread's David Lloyd centres.

But then Whitbread has also run the slide rule over Vaux and its highly-valued Swallow hotels chain. If Vaux sells its brewing and tenanted pubs operation as planned it too would look more attractive to bidders.

Of course, all this may just be the wishlist of frustrated institutional shareholders who are waiting for their dismal investments to pay off. In Greenalls' case they are Schroders and the new value fund set up by Hermes which played such a prominent part in the removal of David Montgomery at Mirror Group. Hermes says it is not in the business of provoking bids and prefers to work with the management. But with the track record of the Greenalls board, that patience may not last long.

ONS cost cutting

MANAGEMENT consultants are often brought in to reach an obvious conclusion, and KPMG's report on opportunities for cutting costs at the Office for National Statistics seems

no exception – contract-out and downsize. After a pause of a few days for “consultation” the Treasury will embrace the idea of bringing in the private sector to collect official data. The justification is that the ONS could save money and concentrate on the analysis of the raw data, where it has a huge advantage.

But it will be a terrible mistake. For one thing, consumers and businesses are far less likely to want to give personal or commercial information to private sector organisations. Although there has been a successful experiment in contracting out the collection of retail price figures, these do not have the sensitivity of much of the information the ONS is collecting. Will anybody want to send in their census forms to commercial market researchers in 2001?

More fundamentally, the mass of economic and social statistics collected by the ONS are a crucial public good in a modern economy. Providing top quality, impartial statistics is one of the essential tasks of government in an age when information is a vital source of competi-

tive advantage. It is essential to the transparency and accountability of government, too, which is something the Chancellor for one keeps emphasising as a precondition for economic success.

Britain probably has better quality and better value for money statistics than any other country in the world. For all the problems with the average earnings figures – suspended after two sets of radical revisions last autumn and now due to be relunched this month – other industrialised countries apart from the US provide far poorer figures.

The ONS has not helped its case with the disastrous presentation of the changes it was making to the earnings figures. Nor does it have the most harmonious of relationships with its two most important customers, the Treasury and the Bank of England. Even so, the Treasury ought to be announcing a bigger budget and more staff for the beleaguered statisticians. It should also opt for the most independent option for the ONS when the decision on the options in last year's statistics white

paper is announced. Cheeseparing on the information so crucial to government and business is a false economy; a real management consultant's solution.

British Biotech

BRITISH BIOTECH never ceases to disappoint. Yesterday's admission that Marimastat, its star drug, is no better than standard treatments for pancreatic cancer, is another embarrassing chapter in a disaster-stricken history.

First there was the grand dream of creating a “New Glaxo”, a whizzy pharmaceutical giant based on some unproven compounds. Then came the bitter tussle with Andrew Millar, its former chief scientist, who was sacked for examining clinical data on the company's leading products and blowing the whistle on overoptimistic statements. The corker of a row triggered two investigations by stock exchange authorities, a Parliamentary enquiry and a collapse in the share price. The faces around the

boardroom table changed since then but the results have remained the same, witness yesterday's trial failure, which at least partially vindicates Dr Millar's actions.

The new men in charge claim that Marimastat can still work on other cancers and that there are nine other studies to prove it. Shareholders should be patient, they say; these are early days, give us another year. But this is asking a lot of investors who have seen the value of their shares plunge by almost 93 per cent over the past five years. After yesterday's events, there must be a serious question over the future of British Biotech.

The company has a strong balance sheet with cash of over £100m. And it is only a couple of years since this company was the rising star in Britain's rapidly growing biotech sector. But given the dreadful track record and uncertain prospects perhaps the board should finally admit defeat. Would it not now be the honourable course to return the cash to the long-suffering investors and draw the curtains on this sorry tale?

Accounting errors knock Haden profit

HADEN MACLELLAN, the engineering group, yesterday shocked the market when it issued its second profit warning in three months after discovering a series of accounting mistakes at one of its units.

Shares in the company plummeted 12p to a five-year low of 39.5p after it revealed that exceptional costs of around £8m at its paints subsidiary would wipe out profits in the second half of 1998. As a result, 1998 figures would be “substantially below” market forecast, the company said.

The surprise warning, which follows a bearish trading statement issued in November, prompted analysts to slash their pre-tax profit forecasts from around £12m to around £7m.

The company announced that Jeremy Beeton, the director who was responsible for the paints unit, had left the group.

The chief executive, Richard Taylor, said the collapse in profits had been caused by an accounting blunder at Birmingham-based Haden Drysis International.

The unit, which supplies painting equipment to car manufacturers, had misjudged

BY FRANCESCO GUERRERA

the costs of two major contracts, worth a total of around £70m, with two leading car makers. It also wrongly assumed that part of the costs could be recouped from the clients and recorded them as recoverable income, Mr Taylor said.

He said the mistakes were “a serious error of judgement” and that a number of staff within Haden Drysis had not complied with the company's internal control procedures. “Some people were skirting around the procedures. This is totally unacceptable.”

Mr Taylor said that the company had tightened its controls and hired more staff to check the accounting of its subsidiaries. He added that an internal investigation throughout the group had found no other episodes of mistaken accounting.

The chief executive said that he would take direct responsibility for the running of the Process Engineering division, which includes the troubled paints subsidiary.

Mr Beeton would not be the last person to leave the group as a result of the affair, Mr Taylor added.

IN BRIEF

Traders hit by Griffin may get 80% of money back, says liquidator

CITY FUTURES traders hit by the collapse of Griffin Trading last year could get up to 80 per cent of their money back, the liquidators of the London branch of the futures broker said yesterday. Finbarr O'Connell of Grant Thornton has written to traders who had money with Griffin saying that the firm is applying for a court ruling to give clients precedence over other creditors in line with the practice of the US Commodity and Futures Trading Commission. Traders, some of whom lost up to £1m in the collapse, had been told that they were likely to get 40-60 per cent back.

US request on Zeneca/Astra deal

THE US Federal Trade Commission has asked Zeneca and Astra for more information on their £43bn merger just days after the European Commission had extended the length of its inquiry into the pharmaceutical groups' deal. However, both firms predicted the union would be implemented in the second-quarter of this year. Astra is due to report its full-year figures today, with Zeneca – Britain's third biggest drugs and agrochemicals business – reporting tomorrow.

Smith exits Associated British Ports

ASSOCIATED BRITISH PORTS is replacing its ports managing director, Andrew Smith, who runs the bulk of the company, with Bo Lerenius, Stena Line's former chief executive. Mr Lerenius is to take on the new role of chief executive, which absorbs Mr Smith's current job. Mr Smith executive, which absorbs Mr Smith's current job. Mr Smith will leave with a payoff of around £200,000 – equivalent to one year's salary – after only two years in the top job. The shares fell 13.5p to 265p.

Flextech offers web through TV

FLEXTech INTERACTIVE, the online business of the television programming supplier, has joined a trial being run by WebTV, the Microsoft subsidiary that allows people to access the Internet through their televisions. FT will offer interactive content for the trial, which is currently on offer to cable customers in Liverpool and London.

Japan's trade surplus hits \$139bn

JAPAN'S trade surplus with the rest of the world hit a record 15.86 trillion yen (\$139bn) last year. A collapse in imports due to the economic slump took the figure 38 per cent higher than the previous year. Exports also declined. The surplus on trade in goods rose 30 per cent to ¥15.99 trillion.

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Small caps start to reveal their hidden value

IT IS BEGINNING to look as if shares on the stock market undercard, after a long run of poor performance, are at last emerging into the sunlight. This year the small cap index has displayed unexpected vigour, and since the middle of last month has, with a few hiccups, made steady progress.

It is now around the level achieved in the middle of August and could be starting to run ahead of its fellow indices, the Footsie and the 250-strong mid cap index.

Takeover action and management buyouts have been major contributors to the sudden display of enthusiasm. They underlined what many investors had for long overlooked - the hidden value lurking in the less glamorous areas of the market.

The sudden batch of surveys drawing attention to the so-called public-to-private deals has, rather belatedly, added fuel to what was already a smouldering fire.

Yesterday the small cap index edged forward a further

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

that the signalled Albright & Wilson bid was about to appear lifted the chemical group's shares 10p to 100.5p.

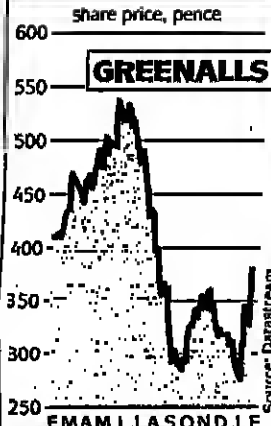
Footsie followed Friday's advance with a 72.5-point gain to 6,023.2, its first time above 6,000 since the start of the month. The mid cap index fell 10.5 points to 5,177.2.

In recent weeks Footsie has been inclined merely to mirror the Dow Jones average, but with New York closed it had to stand on its own two feet, gathering inspiration from hopes that this week's flow of company results will take on an upbeat tone.

Barclays, figures today, was one of the best performing Footsie shares, up 74p to 1,590p. Other banks were firm, encouraged by Friday's Lloyds TSB results and the signal that it intends to seek out acquisitions.

BT, on its Internet boost, rose a further 27.5p to a 1,072p.

SHARE SPOTLIGHT



3.6 points to 2,240.6. There was, for once, not much in the way of corporate action to create excitement.

The only deal was what looked like a 12p-a-share reverse takeover of Clan Homes, which jumped 20p to 110p. But there was the usual raft of rumours. Austin Reed, the menswear retailer, rose a further 14.5p to 113.5p on stories of Arcadia or Selfridges interest. Shami Ahmed, the man who created excitement by stake-holding in House of Fraser last month, is said to have 2 per cent. Allied Carpets piled on 4p to 43.5p on suggestions that venture capitalists may pounce.

Struggling Tie Rack firmed by 8p to 36p as stories resurfaced of a merger with unquoted Sock Shop. Even Laura Ashley, up 2p to 20.5p, was accorded the benefit of a bid rumour with the upmarket womenswear chain, Hobbs, said to be on the prowl.

Union, once the proud Union Discount Co of London, rose 5p to 25.5p on vague talk of corporate action. And hopes

peak. Suggestions that SmithKline Beecham may return to the merger fray pushed the shares 22.5p higher to 863.5p.

National Power, said to be planning to float its international operations, was at one time 22p higher; it ended 8.5p firmer at 536.5p.

Greenalls, one of the market's bewilderment takeover candidates, overtook 36.5p to 37.5p as Whitbread, up 32p to 865.5p, was again rumoured to be preparing to strike.

Struggling Rank results on Friday, firmed 2.25p to 205.5p after selling five outlets to Lumina, up 20p to 800p.

British Biotech fell 4.5p to 21.5p, a new low, following inconclusive trials for its Marimastat cancer treat-

ment. The shares topped 300p three years ago.

Leisure groups firmed as stories again swirled of takeover action. Airtronic flew 11p higher to 457.5p with Carnival again the name in the frame, and Northern Leisure rose 7p to 132p.

BSkyB firmed 1.75p to 508p, with the price probably restrained by stories that the share recovery since last week's interim results could prompt some remaining major shareholders to sell.

British Steel slipped 8.75p to 125.25p following reports it might bid again for Salzgitter, a troubled German steel maker. Tobacco shares were mixed after the Government stubbed out plans by the National Health Service to launch legal action to recover smoking-related health costs. Gallaher firmed 8.5p to 423p.

Rage Software, a computer games group, added 0.75p to 15.75p on confirmation of its deal with Microsoft and the forecast of profits of not less than £3.1m in the year

ending June. On-Line, another computer games group, rose 36p to 191p. It announced on Friday that it was in talks with Nintendo. Yesterday its marketing director, Clem Chambers, who sold shares during the rip-roaring run last month, pumped £365,000 into the company buying shares at 139p. He now has 27.3 per cent.

Much of the SHI holding has come from institutions, which seem to be bailing out. There are suggestions of some Italian interest in the shares, which have come up from their 26p low reached in October.

Zergo, an Internet security group, firmed 2.5p to 705p ahead of a meeting with analysts next month.

A profit warning lowered engineer Haden MacLellan 12p to 39.5p and Sherwood, the clothing group, fell 5p to 31p as a management buyout was abandoned.

Merrydown, the struggling cider maker, held at 26.5p. Leather & Greenwood has sliced its profit expectations. It is now looking for £250,000 in the year ending next month with £760,000 in the following year.

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COMPANY RESULTS

Name	Turnover (£)	Pre-tax (£)	EPS	Dividend	Pay day	X-div
Alcatel & Bond Holdings (H) 145m (35.1m)	1.1m (0.82m)	1.20p (1.88p)	1.20p (1.88p)	1.20p (1.88p)	06.07.99	07.08.99
British Biotech (H) 3.70m (0.81m)	24.82m (30.82m)	1.47m (1.08m)	1.47m (1.08m)	1.47m (1.08m)	06.07.99	07.08.99
Worleyparsons Property Services (H) 5.1m (0.29m)	47.58m (54.57m)	38.30p (27.58p)	38.30p (27.58p)	38.30p (27.58p)	06.07.99	07.08.99
Worleyparsons Property Services (H) 5.1m (0.29m)	47.58m (54.57m)	38.30p (27.58p)	38.30p (27.58p)	38.30p (27.58p)	06.07.99	07.08.99
Worleyparsons Property Services (H) 5.1m (0.29m)	47.58m (54.57m)	38.30p (27.58p)	38.30p (27.58p)	38.30p (27.58p)	06.07.99	07.08.99

(F) - Final (I) - Interim (Q) - Quarterly (SP) - Split Period (N) - Nine Months

FOREIGN EXCHANGE RATES

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
UK	1.0000	2.5164	2.5159	0.6147	0.6152
Australia	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Canada	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Denmark	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
France	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Germany	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Greece	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Hong Kong	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Italy	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Japan	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Malaysia	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Netherlands	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
New Zealand	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Norway	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Portugal	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Saudi Arabia	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Singapore	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
South Africa	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Spain	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Sweden	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Switzerland	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Taiwan	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Thailand	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
Turkey	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478
USA	1.5173	19.917	19.904	1.5474	1.5478

OTHER SPOT RATES

Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
Argentina	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Brazil	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
China	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Czech Rep	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Denmark	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
France	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Germany	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Greece	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Hong Kong	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Italy	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Japan	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Malaysia	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Netherlands	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
New Zealand	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Norway	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Portugal	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Saudi Arabia	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Singapore	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
South Africa	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Spain	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Sweden	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Switzerland	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Taiwan	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Thailand	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
Turkey	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262
USA	1.6258	1.8950	1.8950	0.6262	0.6262

Mersey Docks sails in with strong profit rise

By FRANCESCO GUERRERA

MERSEY DOCKS, Britain's second-largest port operator, yesterday dispelled some of the gloom surrounding the sector with a strong set of results and an upbeat trading statement.

The owner of the ports of Liverpool and Sheerness, Kent, said the market fears over the impact of the economic downturn on harbour operators were unfounded. Share prices in port companies such as Mersey Docks and Associated British Ports have been under pressure as the market worried that the economic troubles would slash volumes and cripple profits.

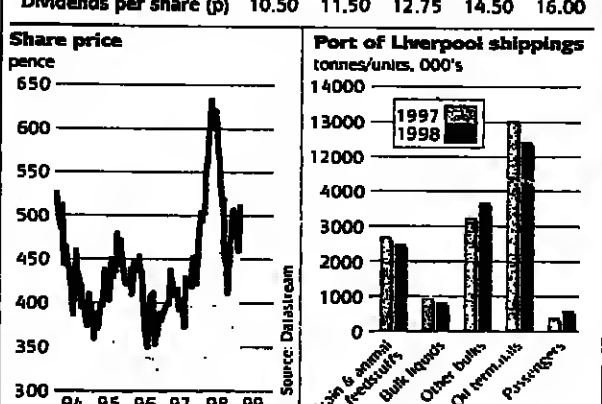
However, Mersey Docks showed that profitability remained strong despite the slowdown. The company, which last year settled its dispute with the Liverpool dockers, posted 11 per cent growth in 1998 operating profit to £53.3m. Free profit rose 37 per cent to £47.6m, although the 1997 number had been hit by a £10m charge to cover the striking dockers' redundancies.

The rise in profit came despite sluggish growth in sales. Turnover was up by only 6.6 per cent to £179.8m as the BSE crisis caused a sharp drop in animal feed shipped. Oil revenues were hit by the refurbishment of a Shell terminal.

The finance director, Alastair Findlay, maintained that profit growth had been achieved by focusing on higher-margin

MERSEY DOCKS: AT A GLANCE

Market value: £459.568m, share price 511p	
Trading record	94 95 96 97 98
Turnover (£m)	129.89 138.01 149.66 168.50 179.68
Profit for the year (£m)	33.59 31.75 29.65 34.58 47.57
Earnings per share (p)	25.33 24.44 22.77 27.35 38.30
Dividends per share (p)	10.50 11.50 12.75 14.50 16.00



Port of Liverpool shippings (tonnes/units, 000's)

1997 1998

Grain & feedstuffs Bulk cargo Oil & minerals Containers

Source: Datascan

products such as grains, containers and fruit. Passenger traffic registered a sharp rise thanks to the opening of a new ferry service from Liverpool to Dublin. "We have maintained volumes where it really matters," Mr Findlay said.

He added that the company was confident on the outlook as it was set to remain "relatively immune" to economic troubles in the UK and abroad. Mersey's loyal customer base and low exposure to Asia-bound goods should help the company weather the downturn.

Further growth could come from Mersey's ambitious capital expenditure programme, said chief executive Trevor Furlong. Mr Furlong, who yesterday said he would retire in 2000, to be replaced by Peter Jones, the head of the port division, said Mersey spent £51m on its ports in 1998 and plans to spend a further £40m this year.

Mr Furlong said the projects would help results in the second half of the year. However, shares in Mersey remained unchanged at 511p, well below their 12-month peak of 635p.



Furlong: Set to retire as chief executive next year

Alastair Gunn, transport analyst at Credit Lyonnais Securities, said the market should focus on Mersey's defensive qualities and discard economic fears. He said the company was a big player in a growing market with very high barriers to entry. "It is expensive to build new ports and existing players have almost a monopoly of supply. Mersey is in a very good position in the market, with two well-focused ports covering the west and east coasts."

The shares - on 12 times 1998's forecast earnings of £50m - trade at a large discount and Mr Gunn is advising clients to buy. "People should focus on the value of these shares. The fact that, despite the economic downturn, they are not warning on current trading is almost equivalent to a profit upgrade."

Royalblue has finger on IT pulse

WE'VE HAD the millennium, the euro, and the Internet. But a new bid is about to hit the UK's information technology industry.

It's called customer relationship management, which basically means installing software that helps companies to keep their clients happy. In a few years' time, the experts insist, every self-respecting firm will have such a system.

Royalblue, the software firm, provided evidence of that trend yesterday. Its financial trading systems division, which has been the traditional source of growth, reported revenues up 41

per cent to £15.7m - a spectacular increase by most standards.

But its customer interaction software unit - which supplies IT help desk and customer support systems - grew even faster, expanding revenues by 63 per cent to £11m. Excluding the costs of last year's flotation, Royalblue's pre-tax profits jumped 50 per cent to £4.54m.

"Increasingly it is customer service that gives companies an advantage," says John Hamer, Royalblue's chief executive.

That's driving demand for customer support systems.

The demand is bringing in new clients. While Royalblue still works closely with the large investment banks who use its trading systems, the company has started supplying customer services software to clients as diverse as Barclays' online banking division and the Lancashire Constabulary.

Mr Hamer dismisses suggestions that demand is likely to slow down later this year. "We think the market will accelerate," he says.

As a result, Mr Hamer sees

no need for acquisitions. He prefers to spend heavily on developing new applications, such as derivatives and treasury products, which are based on the same basic architecture as its existing software.

For analysts, this is the key to the company's value. "The prospects of the business probably justifies the current valuation," says Ian Spence, an analyst at West LB Panmure.

Stockbrokers forecast profits of £6m this year, putting the shares, which hit a new high of 450p yesterday, on a forward earnings multiple of 39 times.

From Fitch to Strasbourg

CHRIS HURNE is resigning from Fitch IBCA, the global debt-raising agency, in order to run for election to the European Parliament as a Liberal Democrat.

Mr Hurne is head of the sovereign and international public finance group, looking after bond ratings for the company. He says he is "hopeful" of being elected as an MEP. He has secured the number two slot for the Lib Dems in the South-east region, the number one slot being occupied by Emma Nicholson.

If elected Mr Hurne, a "convicted europhile" and a former business and city editor of this very organ, hopes to join the Economic and Monetary Affairs Committee of the European Parliament. This is the committee that will grill Wim Duisenberg about the activities of the European Central Bank - insofar as the ECB is answerable to anyone.

PEOPLE AND BUSINESS

BY JOHN WILLCOCK

If he gets in Mr Hurne will join Graham Watson, already a Lib Dem MEP who once had the thankless task of being spokesman for the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) in the Jacques Attali "gold-plated door handles" era. Mr Watson then went on to be a spokesman for HSBC before ascending to Strasbourg.

City of Amlo

ING BARINGS failed to agree on a location for its head office following the latest shake-up of its investment bank activities, so it invented a new city - Amlo.

The problem is that, following the reorg, ING Barings has two top people based in Amsterdam and two in London.



Net departures

INTERNET Technology Group (ITG) has "streamlined" its board with the resignations of Damian Aspinall, son of casino and zoo owner John Aspinall, Anton Bilton and Charles Moir as non-executive directors.

The group obtained its AIM listing by a complex reverse takeover of a quoted property company three years ago, of which Mr Bilton and Mr Aspinall were directors. Now ITG has sold off the remaining property bits and the duo have left by mutual consent. Mr Moir joined the board when ITG bought Xara Networks.

Leaving Ports

ANDREW SMITH unexpectedly missed out on the job of chief executive of Associated British Ports (ABP) after two years as managing director of the company's ports operations. The job instead went to Bo Lerenius from Stena Line.

Rage lifts the lid on deal with Microsoft

By PETER THAL LARSEN

RAGE SOFTWARE, the games group, yesterday unveiled a long-awaited partnership with Microsoft and surprised investors by issuing a profits forecast.

Under the deal Microsoft will be the exclusive publisher of the personal computer version of Striker, the football simulation game Rage is developing with Rued Gullit, the Newcastle United manager. The game is expected on the shelves in the autumn.

Peter Desmier, finance director, said the deal meant Rage would avoid the cost of publishing and distributing the game itself. "Having funded all our titles to this stage, we can now choose whether to publish them or not," he said. "In this case we prefer to let somebody else take the risk."

Striker is also likely to be published for the Sega Dreamcast and PlayStation games consoles, although it is likely to be given a different name.

Rage said that in the current financial year, ending in June, it would publish six game versions for different consoles, which analysts said were likely to be based on two games. In the year to June 2000, that number is expected to double to 12.

The company said pre-tax profits this year would not be less than £3.1m and would show "further significant growth" in the following 12 months.

Rage shares, which have had a rollercoaster ride in the past few years, firmed by 0.5p to 15.75p. The shares have been a favourite takeover target for investors. Mr Desmier insisted the company was not currently in talks.

Analysts, who have traditionally criticised the company for not keeping investors informed, said the profit forecast meant that the shares looked to be reasonably valued on a forward earnings multiple of less than 20.

However, they also pointed to the volatile nature of the computer games market and said that Rage would have to produce a consistent run of results before the City would be ready to take it seriously.

Flippin' mad

JAYNE TORVILL, the ice dancer, will be at the Broadgate Arena Ice Rink today to launch the City's Pancake Race on the Ice. The event is in aid of the Colon Cancer Concern charity.

If you get there by noon you should be able to see teams from Cazenove, NatWest Services, Charles Stanley and Barclays whizzing around the ice flipping pancakes.

There will be "Flippin' Mad" prizes for the fastest teams and a "City Slickers" prize for the best dressed team.

E-mail: j.willcock@independent.co.uk

LIFE FINANCIAL FUTURES

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Est. floor volume	Open Interest
5 Yr Gilt	Mar-99	116.98	117.20	116.70	33208.00
5 Yr Gilt	Mar-99	108.50			878706.00
German Bund	Mar-99	113.35			63.00
3 Month Euro	Mar-99	113.05	113.85	113.18	12625.00
3 Month Euro	Mar-99	123.05			42650.00
3 Month Euro	Mar-99	129.05			1375.00
3 Month Euro	Mar-99	129.05			18946.00
3 Month Euro	Mar-99	129.05			13937.00
3 Month Euro	Mar-99	129.05			1069.00
3 Month Euro	Mar-99	129.05			11616.00
3 Month Euro	Mar-99	129.05			8716.00
3 Month Euro	Mar-99	129.05			12610.00
3 Month Euro	Mar-99	129.05			12610.00
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3 Month Euro	Mar-99	129.05			12610.00
3 Month Euro	Mar-99	129.05			12610.00
3 Month Euro	Mar-99	129.05			12610.00
3 Month Euro	Mar-99	129.05			

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SPORT

Football: Spurs are not the only team involved in tonight's Worthington Cup semi-final to boast a French influence

Hughes puts the pain to one side

WIMBLEDON'S ANSWER to David Ginola would soon find himself being carried off in agony tonight if he attempted just one of the Frenchman's twisting runs. And yet despite being only 80 per cent fit and unable to cross the ball in certain situations (something of a drawback for a winger), Michael Hughes remains arguably the biggest threat to Tottenham Hotspur reaching their fourth League Cup final.

Hughes has been struggling along with a double hernia for almost the entire season, but so important is he - even in this shape - to the hopes of the south London club that not until Wimbledon are out of the running for silverware will he have the operation done. At the moment it is scheduled for 22 March - the day after the Worthington Cup final, by which time he hopes to be too well anaesthetised with champagne to care one way or the other.

If Wimbledon are to conjure the victory needed at Selhurst Park after a goalless first leg in this semi-final, it may well be to Hughes whom they will look. Except when he is cutting in on goal to unleash the kind of shot which ought to earn him more goals, he is not one of those attacking midfielders who automatically grab one's attention, like Ginola. But he has an

'For the first six months in France I didn't know whether I was coming or going, but I got used to it in the second season'

uncanny eye for the main chance, that little pass played with perfect timing, precision and, not least, weight, that can kill the opposition. Hopelessly prejudiced though he is, Joe Kinnear was not completely off his head when he suggested recently that Hughes should be a contender for Player of the Year. The man himself looked deeply embarrassed about the suggestion, replying: "Well, you know the gaffer - there must have been somebody looking to buy me." Yet there is definitely something exceptional about this much underrated player.

As he said with a wisdom which could apply to himself in his present condition: "A good player can control a game without exerting too much effort. I like to think that when I get the ball, 80 per cent of the time I can pass it to a team-mate."

That may sound like a very minor boast but, at the pace at which the English game is played nowadays, it is actually quite an achievement. He owes his ability to do that to three years playing in Ginola's homeland for Strasbourg, where Franck Leboeuf was a team-mate,

BY CLIVE WHITE

which he believes improved him as a player by 20 per cent. The French club obviously saw a quality in him which Peter Reid, the then manager of Manchester City, did not, when he agreed to sell him for £600,000.

The irony is that Hughes did not really want to go, but he was so hurt by Reid's indifference as to whether he stayed or went that, like so many players, he bid a sad farewell to Maine Road. The players whom that club have let slip through their fingers does not bear thinking about, if you are from the blue half of Manchester.

I suppose it could have been a case of mistaken identity, and certainly some of the French fans must have thought so when they saw the local paper's headline: "Hughes from Manchester joins Strasbourg". But instead of the Welsh bruiser they got this scrawny Irishman - or at least that's what he became after three years of eating just chicken, fish and pasta and without any sauce. Not even ketchup.

"We only played one game a week, so we were out on the training ground all the time practising," he said. "We did lots of close work, six or seven-a-side, so it was bang, bang, bang stuff, and you got used to the bodily contact because they always go man-to-man. As soon as you got the ball you were under pressure. For the first six months I didn't know whether I was coming or going, but I got used to it in the second season and really enjoyed it."

"Our coach was Gilbert Gress - who coached Switzerland last season - a long-haired guy who used to go completely mad on the touchline. It was all about attack, attack, attack. You had to work hard but I enjoyed it and it definitely improved me as a player."

"That's one of the differences I've noticed coming back. Because we have so many games here we aren't out there training as much as the Continentals. The crowds may be less passionate but there's no way they are less professional - in fact they are definitely more professional."

"I played just behind the front two, so it was one of those positions that are a bit of a luxury where you don't have to defend so much but are expected to score goals and get a lot of assists. If I had to say which game suits my style better I'd say the French, because I like playing in that position and we don't really have it here."

Eventually the professionalism became too much for him. "I know it's our profession and we're lucky to be able to do something we enjoy, but it's just too much out there. It's football, football, football. By the end of the week your head was ready to explode from it. I remember, after one game when we had beaten Auxerre 2-1 away, the coach was really happy and told us: 'Right lads,



Wimbledon's Michael Hughes: 'We're starting to play more football. We're also attracting good players like Hartson'

Empics

that was great - you can have one beer each! The French boys thought they'd had a real result."

Je ne regrette rien. Hughes returned to England, with West Ham, not only a better player but with a French wife, Marie, and an ability to speak a foreign language "almost fluently". He and Leboeuf helped one other in that direction. "I knew he'd do well," said Hughes. "He was a class player there and he's a class player here. Outside of France he wasn't known but all the coaches knew him. Getting into the national side definitely opened a few doors for him."

His career at Upton Park followed a similar pattern to that of his new team-mate, John Hartson. Outstanding in the first season but indifferent in the second. For such a quiet, unassuming man he can be a real devil on the pitch, and after a couple of suspensions which caused him to miss some important games Harry Redknapp would not have him back in the team.

Even now he is just coming back from a one-match suspension and

already has nine bookings to his name this season, which is a lot even for a Wimbledon player. But at £1.6m the prudent Kinnear never spent money more wisely: Hughes' quality one senses, has been the catalyst for change at Wimbledon. "We're starting to play more football. We mix it up a bit. We're also attracting good players to the club like Hartson. We're a buying club now, you know."

They're no longer the underdogs they were 11 years ago when they humbled Liverpool in the FA

Cup final at Wembley. And Kinnear much enjoys the fact that their club's record buy (Hartson at £7m) is bigger than that at his old club Tottenham.

The ban on English clubs prevented them from competing in Europe last time. It is their destiny they feel, to return and put matters to rest. And who better to lead them into the uncharted territory of Europe than their man from Strasbourg? But first they must deal with Spurs and a certain native Frenchman.

Graham remains a hungry manager

BY BILL PIERCE

GEORGE GRAHAM'S obsession for football's glittering prizes took hold when, in his first season as manager of Arsenal, they captured the Littlewood's League Cup on a sunny April afternoon at Wembley in 1987. Now, 12 years on and five major trophies later, it still burns fiercely within him.

So it is hardly unexpected that, having crossed the great north London divide via the roundabout route of a year's ban from the game and two-year sojourn at Leeds, he is relishing the chance to clinch a Wembley return with his new team, Tottenham, by securing another triumph tonight at Selhurst Park over familiar rivals - Wimbledon.

When Arsenal sacked him, four years ago this week, after the infamous "transfer bungs" affair, he promised himself he would eventually bounce back and become even more successful than in his glory days at Highbury. At the age of 54, that ambition still has some way to go, and he admitted yesterday: "How can I call myself a better manager now than I was then? I won six trophies in eight years at Arsenal but I haven't added to that list yet."

"I'm just as ambitious as I was at Highbury, maybe even more so, but I can't achieve anything without the efforts and quality of the players at

SPURS V DONS THE STORY SO FAR

SATURDAY 16 JANUARY
Premiership
Tottenham 0 Wimbledon 0
SATURDAY 23 JANUARY
FA Cup Fourth round
Wimbledon 1 Tottenham 1
TUESDAY 27 JANUARY
Worthington Cup semi-final first leg
Wimbledon 0 Tottenham 0
WEDNESDAY 3 FEBRUARY
FA Cup fourth-round replay
Tottenham 3 Wimbledon 0

my disposal. I think it is about time the Tottenham players had some plaudits for what they've done since I came to the club."

"I work hard and I demand that other people put in the same commitment, but quite honestly I'm a bit fed up with all the media comment being all about me."

Tottenham's FA Cup trip to Leeds on Saturday was popularly billed as Graham returning to face the flak from fans of his previous employers at Elland Road. "But it was not about me versus David O'Leary," said Graham, "and it's not about me versus Joe Kinnear tomorrow night."

"Of course, it would be great to get to Wembley again and I'm sure Wimbledon want to be there just as much. It will be decided by what happens out on the pitch."

For tonight's Worthington Cup semi-final second leg - the fifth meeting of the two teams in a month - Graham will have David Ginola available again in attack after injury. Allan Nielsen is likely to return in place of the cup-tied Tim Sherwood.

The Dons, who gained a 0-0 draw in the first leg at White Hart Lane, will give late fitness tests to several players. Efan Ekoku is struggling with a shoulder injury and Marcus Gayle nursing a hamstring problem. Carl Leaburn is confident of recovering from his back injury, and Kenny Cunningham, Robbie Earle and Ben Thatcher also hope to prove their fitness.

We must halt spread of Spreadbury disease

THE ADVANTAGE of writing a column is not that you command any power. If that is what you are after, you will do better as a headmaster, or a bus conductor.

No, the point is, that you can air your views to more people than can be accommodated in a sitting room, in a saloon bar or even in a large-sized lecture theatre.

Television performers, as we know, can reach many more people, millions more. But, as we also know, television is - to put it politely - a more complicated medium.

Last season the penalty try was spreading like a rash. The first red spot had appeared a few seasons before in the University match, when that popular referee Tony Spreadbury awarded Cambridge a try between the posts after persistent infringements by Oxford.

Previously referees had been reluctant to follow this course,



ALAN WATKINS

In fact I once saw that great, tragic full-back Terry Price all but decapitate an opposing wing who was careering down the touchline with no one except Price between him and a certain try.

The referee promptly blew up and awarded the attacking side a penalty for a high and dangerous tackle (another part of the game, by

the way, which is badly in need of clarification). The angle was acute and the kick was duly missed. Today the attacking side would have had a guaranteed seven points.

Or perhaps not. For the penalty tries I have seen recently, in the post-Spreadbury era, have been for infringements on or just short of the defending side's line: for pulling down a man, handling in a ruck or, above all, collapsing a scrum.

The precise offence does not invariably need repetition for the penalty try to be awarded. The practice of referees varies in this respect. It is enough, according to the interpretation of some of them, if the attacking side have been camping out on or near their opponents' line for a longish spell.

Others, again, are capable of awarding a penalty try simply for one collapsed scrum.

What law 12B actually says is that

"a penalty try shall be awarded between the posts if but for foul play by the defending team a try would probably have been scored, or it would probably have been scored in a more favourable position than that where the ball was grounded".

The law does not mention either persistent infringement or a particular kind of infringement. It talks only about foul play. It also says that the scoring of a try must have been probable.

If an attacking side are going forward at a scrum intending a pushover try, and the defending front row collapse the scrum, a referee is clearly within his rights in awarding a penalty try. However, he must be certain the foul play came from the defending front row. How can he be, unless he is very close indeed to the action - or, as it often is, inaction - and is preferably a former front-row forward himself?

Any skilled prop can collapse a scrum so as to secure a guaranteed seven points for his side.

But penalty tries are not always awarded only when the attacking scrum is moving forward, intending a pushover try. Not a bit of it: they are often given when the attacking side, whether at a scrum, a ruck or a maul, are trying to secure the ball for their scrum-half to make such use of as he sees fit. In these circumstances, a try is hardly ever probable. It is even less so today, in an era of ferocious tackling around the scrum and in midfield alike.

But referees are perverting the laws by awarding penalty tries, not for preventing probable tries by means of foul play, but for persistently preventing release of the ball to the attacking side.

I am sorry; but this is not what the law says. The correct course to follow is to do what referees did be-

fore the Spreadbury fashion took hold, even though it may be less fashionable now than it was last season. That course is to award the attacking side a simple penalty.

Today this might well lead not to a shot at goal and a probable three points, but to a kick into the corner for a speculative five or seven points. This is another new fashion, created not by referees, but by players - or coaches. I must confess to a certain feeling of satisfaction when the kicker deposits the ball in touch-in-goal or, more seriously for the attacking side, over the dead-ball line.

I still cannot see the purpose of this exercise, unless the attacking side, lacking a Joel Stranksy or a Neil Jenkins, are awarded a penalty at or just over the half-way line. If they want to attempt to score a try nearer their opponents' line, what is wrong with a certain possession given by a tap penalty?

TOMORROW



Sir Tom Finney talks to Brian Viner about a memorable goal, waxes wistful about wingers and remembers Hungary's football revolution

Henry rues pack's lack of muscle

THE WHOLE point of being a Messiah is that you have God on your side.

Unfortunately for Graham Henry, the New Zealander charged with giving the poor sinners of Wales a long-awaited taste of rugby heaven, divine intervention appears to be working against him rather than for him. Indeed, with Allan Bateman definitely out of this weekend's must-win Five Nations match with Ireland at Wembley and varying degrees of doubt surrounding three of his tight five, Henry is having a hellish time of it on the selection front.

So hellish, in fact, that the national coach decided to postpone yesterday's planned team announcement for 24 hours. Instead, he put his squad through two training sessions either side of lunch in order to check on Jonathan Humphreys, David Young and Craig Quinell, all of whom are con-

RUGBY UNION

BY CHRIS HEWETT

sidered crucial to any resurrection of the Red Dragon following the crippling disappointment at Murrayfield 10 days ago.

Bateman's withdrawal surprised no one; the highly valued outside centre pulled a hamstring during Richmond's Premiership victory over Sale at Reading on Sunday and his appearance before the Welsh medical team yesterday was nothing more than a formality.

In a sense, it was the least of Henry's problems, given his foodness for the muscular talents of Mark Taylor, the Swansea centre who proved such a handful in the pre-Christmas Tests against South Africa and Argentina. Taylor is 99 per cent certain to rejoin his club-mate, Scott Gibbs, in his country's midfield on Saturday.

It is the muscle, or lack of it, among the forwards that concerns the coach. Both Young, the Cardiff prop, and Quinell, the Richmond lock, missed the championship opener with the Scots and in their absence the Welsh pack performed with all the venom of the proverbial seven-stone weakling. If neither make the cut for this one - and worse still, if Humphreys, the ever physical Cardiff hooker, finally succumbs to the collection of minor injuries that have doused his fire over the past few weeks - the hard men of Ireland will fancy their chances of a seventh away victory over the Welsh in 14 years.

If Henry has his fitness worries, spare a thought for his opposite number in Australia, Rod Macqueen. The Wallaby coach discovered yesterday that John Eales, the most complete player in world rugby, had suffered a serious shoulder injury that may rule him out of this autumn's World Cup. Eales, who damaged tendons during a gym session and will undergo immediate surgery, is certain to miss the Super 12 provincial series and, quite probably, the Tri-Nations tournament as well.

"John will be out of action for months," said Strath Gordon, a spokesman for the Australian Rugby Union. "We don't want to second guess anything, but it doesn't look good. It's not a simple injury; it's the same shoulder that kept him out for a year in 1993."

Eales, the current Australian captain, joins two first-choice backs, Matt Burke and Ben Tume, on a Wallaby injury list that is growing by the week.

Back in the old country, Mike Catt declared himself fit and available for selection for England's Calcutta Cup match with Scotland at Twickenham on Saturday. The Bath stand-off's recovery from a "dead" leg left Clive Woodward with something of a dilemma, however: Catt's poor recent form and injuries to two leading inside centres, Will Greenwood and Phil de Glanville, raised the possibility of the coach unveiling a reshaped midfield at today's team announcement.

Whoever takes the field this weekend, they are unlikely to end up looking like Hiawatha's braves after the first ruck - the fate that controversially befell the players of Ireland and France two Saturdays ago. After heavy lobbying from the Rugby Football Union, the tournament sponsors, Lloyds TSB, agreed to abandon plans to paint their logo on the Twickenham half-way line and settle instead for branding behind both sets of posts.

Smith was grateful for the news, if a little taken aback, as he expected there to be another non-playing appointment after the success of the experiment in Budapest.

"That's why I was surprised," he said. "I didn't think I would be chosen. I thought they might have tried the same idea. But don't get me wrong - it's an honour to be picked."

Smith, who spent 10 days in a neck brace after his freak training accident, is coming back to form at the right time. "I know I'm in great shape although I'm still rusty," he said. "I'm only a fraction away from 2.55 shape."

Six other names were added to the British team after the Birmingham event. Ross Baile, the 21-year-old Scot who trains with Colin Jackson, confirmed his place in the 60m hurdles after running a personal best of 7.80sec. Jason Livingston joined Jason Gardener in the 60m metres, while Jamie Baile's name went into the 400m metres after his victory in 45.80sec.

John Regis also booked a trip for the championships, which begin in Maebashi on 5 March, after defeating the AAA indoor champion, Marcus Adam, and America's reigning world indoor champion, Kevin Little, over 200m.

"A lot of people have said I am too old," said the 32-year-old former world silver medalist. "But I will not be hanging up my spikes for a long time." Janine Whitlock, who raised her UK pole vault record to 4.29m, will double up in the 60m metres, and Diane Allgreen will take a place in the 60m hurdles. A final wave of selections will be announced on 25 February.

But if Birmingham proved productive for several Brits, it was highly profitable for Ethiopia's Haile Gebrselassie, who picked up a \$50,000 (£30,000) bonus for setting the 15th world record of his career in the 5,000 metres.

Gebrselassie, who beat the mark established by his Kenyan rival Daniel Komen last year with a time of 12min 50.38sec, reckoned he had lost at least a second to the three back markers who threatened to ruin his



Haile Gebrselassie (centre) on his way to a world record 5,000m time in Birmingham on Sunday

Allsport

Smith can lead by example

STEVE SMITH, out in the cold on Sunday as he missed the Bupa

indoor meeting in Birmingham, was ushered back into pride of place yesterday when he was appointed captain of Britain's team for next month's World Indoor Championships in Japan.

Unlike last August, when he was the non-playing captain of Britain's European Championship team in Budapest due to injury, Smith will play an active part, having returned to high jumping competition for the first time in seven months.

The Olympic bronze medalist, who feared he might never jump again when he badly injured his neck last July, demonstrated his return to fitness with two impressive performances in Germany over the weekend.

On Friday in Arnstadt he jumped 2.24 metres, and while several of his British colleagues were pressing their world indoor claim in Birmingham he jumped 2.27m to finish second in the specialist high jump event at Balingen.

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ATHLETICS

BY MIKE ROWBOTTOM

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Gebrselassie, who beat the mark established by his Kenyan rival Daniel Komen last year with a time of 12min 50.38sec, reckoned he had lost at least a second to the three back markers who threatened to ruin his

evening as they unwittingly balked him on the final bend.

"When those runners came across the track at the end I thought I had lost the world record," said Gebrselassie.

"They seemed to be running in all three lanes and I was scared I might not get past." But the encouragement of a sell-out 8,500 crowd, at least 500 of whom were British-based Ethiopians, saw the world outdoor 5,000 and 10,000m record holder home.

A 16th world record is already in his sights - outdoors over 3,000 metres - and he plans to retain his world 10,000m title in Seville this summer.

Gebrselassie's 15th world indoor record in Maebashi, including those previously selected, was: 60m: J. Gardener (Wales), 8.00m; 100m: J. Livingston (Bath); 200m: J. Livingston (Bath); 400m: J. Livingston (Bath); 800m: J. Livingston (Bath); 1,600m: J. Livingston (Bath); 3,200m: J. Livingston (Bath); 5,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 10,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 15,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 20,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 30,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 40,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 50,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 60,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 70,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 80,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 90,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 100,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 110,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 120,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 130,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 140,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 150,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 160,000m: H. Gebrselassie (Ethiopia); 170,000m: H. 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SPORT

HEALEY BANNED FOR 21 DAYS P24 • HUGHES THE WIMBLEDON GINOLA P21



Taking flight: Hurdlers plough through the mud at Plumpton in yesterday's third race, won eventually by Mick Fitzgerald's mount, the ex-French-trained Allez Wijns

Robert Hallam

Pipe bags France's Festival favourite

RACING

BY RICHARD EDMONDSON

THE WORLD Cup is one thing, but Eoghan is clearly not allowed to let slip to the French another trophy it holds most dear. Hors La Loi III was a Gallic hope for the Triumph Hurdle at next month's Cheltenham Festival until it was announced yesterday he had been purchased for the yard of Britain's leading trainer, Martin Pipe. If you can't beat 'em, buy 'em.

The four-year-old gelding has been unbeaten in two runs in Britain this year for Francois Doumen, who has already taken Cheltenham's greatest prize, the Gold Cup, with The Fellow. The horse would have been ridden by his son Thierry. "He's sold," the trainer admitted last night. "I feel sad for the kid, but at the price I could not advise my client to say no."

Hors La Loi III was promoted to 6-1 joint favourite for the Triumph Hurdle on the back of this news, while there were doubts about the other joint favourite, Katarino. "He was fine this morning," protested his trainer, Nicky Henderson. But then Doumen had said that over the croissants.

Racing, page 22

FA begins talks with Keegan

KEVIN KEEGAN'S appointment as England coach moved a step closer last night after the Football Association's king-makers, David Davies and Noel White, travelled to the north-east to discuss the vacancy with the man currently working under the title of Chief Operating Officer at Second Division Fulham.

Davies, the FA's acting chief executive, and White, the Liverpool director who is chairman of the International Committee, visited Keegan at the home he retains from his time in charge of Newcastle United. An FA spokesman described their two-hour meeting as "amicable", adding that further talks

FOOTBALL
BY PHIL SHAW

with the former England captain would be held "within the next 48 hours".

Although the official line from Lancaster Gate is that the FA is still considering "all options", the fact that Davies and White trekked to Tyneside is a clear indication that they are keen to confirm Keegan as Glenn Hoddle's successor as a matter of urgency.

England have a European Championship fixture against Poland on 27 March. While the FA's technical director, Howard Wilkinson, is likely to be asked

to continue in his interim capacity, the hierarchy would like to avail themselves of Keegan's inspirational input during the build-up to a match which is vital to the team's prospects of qualifying for the finals next year.

Keegan, who had earlier insisted that he planned to have "a quiet day at home with my family", claimed in the aftermath of Hoddle's demise that he was "not interested in the job - so I hope no one has had a bet on me". To actually be asked to lead one's country is, however, a different matter from being pressed to comment on speculation. It would be a major surprise if the 48-year-old from a

South Yorkshire mining family did not now become England's ninth "permanent" manager.

The only fly in the ointment is Keegan's desire to do the decent thing by Fulham and see through their promotion campaign. Having persuaded international players like Chris Coleman, Kit Symons and Paul Peschisolidi to drop into the third tier of the English game, he is determined not to be seen as disloyal to them or to the club's owner, Mohamed al-Fayed. Keegan has 18 months left on his contract, although al-Fayed cleared the way for a compromise by granting Davies permission to approach him.

The club-versus-country debate has resurfaced in relation to England's pursuit of Keegan, even if the club concerned were not Fulham. Walsall, who he once placed and two points behind the London club, yesterday stressed their unwillingness to switch their home game against Fulham from the day of Poland's visit to Wembley in order to preclude any clash of interests for the England coach-elect.

Walsall's commercial director, Roy Whalley, argued that rescheduling would cause a "big upheaval" for his club, who have sold more than 2,000 tickets for the game. Whalley added: "Kevin Keegan missed

our match at Fulham in October through illness, yet that game wasn't postponed. So why should this one be moved if he decides to team up with England on a part-time basis?"

The FA has already indicated that it would grant Keegan leave of absence for the friendly in Hungary, on 28 April, if he felt that Fulham's League position required his presence at Craven Cottage.

Roy Hodgson, the former Blackburn manager who took Switzerland to the World Cup finals in 1994, yesterday endorsed Keegan's candidature, saying he was a "good and experienced" manager. Hodgson, who is reported to be on the shortlist for

the post, said he would regard it as "an honour" to be offered the job, although he had had no contact with the FA.

David Batty has handed the England coach - whoever he will be - an immediate selection headache ahead of the game against Poland.

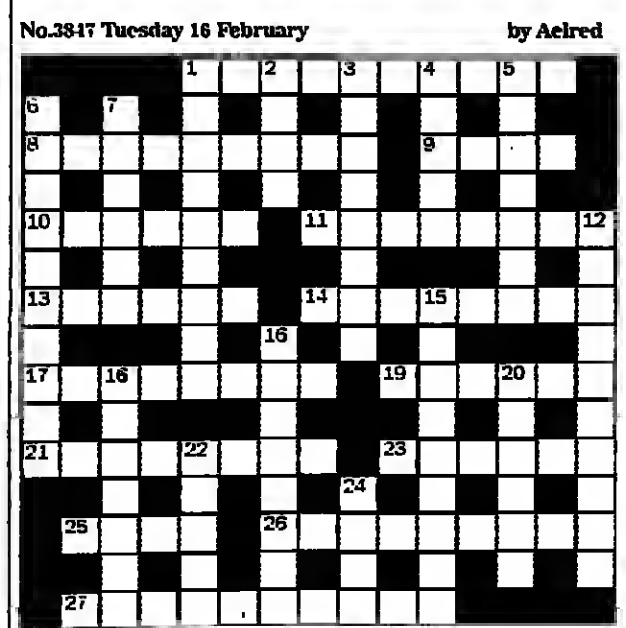
The Leeds midfielder, who was signed by Keegan for Newcastle in 1996, will miss the game against the Poles at Wembley with fractured ribs. Batty suffered the injury on his debut for the Elland Road against Coventry in December following his £4.5m move from Newcastle and has not played since.

With Paul Ince already sus-

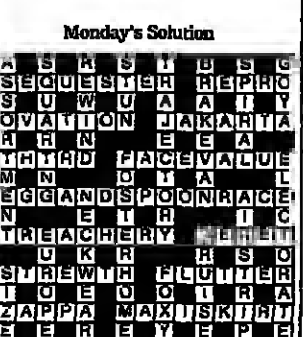
pended for what is a crucial game, the central midfield roles are open to dispute, leaving players such as Nicky Butt, Kieron Dyer and Batty's Leeds team-mate, Lee Bowyer, with the chance to stake their claims for regular international selection.

The loss of Batty will be a major blow to the national side, with a place in the Euro 2000 finals in the balance following a disappointing start to the qualifying campaign. His combative talents were badly missed in the Wembley defeat against France last week, when England lacked anyone to play in the protective role in front of the back four.

THE TUESDAY CROSSWORD



- ACROSS
- Do "verboten" motoring and this could be the result! (6,4)
 - They delay mother taking in "The Messiah" endlessly? (9)
 - Like a type without daughter (4)
 - Get new boat with current name (6)
 - Retreat holding tie? (8)
 - United everybody against die-hard (6)
 - US city houses one who lost to Hippomenes (8)
 - One new wine retains the quality wanted, good and attractive (8)
 - Second ex-PM finds place to put in the knife? (6)
 - Element of hesitation
- DOWN
- Loss of unusual red mitten (9)
 - Hurry up to daughter, an obsessive type (4)
 - Keep vital stuff from head of espionage and friend around CIA (8)
 - British wood of tasteless type (5)
 - Old computer gets new Greek letter (7)



- MONDAY'S SOLUTION
- SEQUESTER
 - REPHRASE
 - UAV
 - ATV
 - OVATION
 - MARKET
 - THIRD
 - FACE
 - PAQUE
 - LESA
 - EGG
 - AND
 - POUNCE
 - ICE
 - THE
 - ANCHOR
 - FEEL
 - UKE
 - HS
 - SHREW
 - FLUTTER
 - UOE
 - OTR
 - ZAPPA
 - MAXI
 - SKIRT
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Bates dismisses football's poor

KEN BATES, the Chelsea chairman responsible for increasing ticket prices at Stamford Bridge to the highest levels in the country, said yesterday that "poverty among football fans is greatly exaggerated." His comments came on the same day that he accused other Premier League clubs of selfishness and said that they "don't give a damn about anyone else."

Bates was speaking in London as a witness in the landmark court case that will decide whether the current television deals between the League, Sky TV and the BBC are illegal. The Office of Fair Trading maintains that the deals - which forbid the clubs from making individual television deals with broadcasters - are not in the public interest and that the public should have a wider choice of televised football.

BY NICK HARRIS

When asked why individual bargaining would be bad for the game, Bates - called as a witness by the League - said that some clubs would ignore their responsibilities to the wider game to try to cash in on their popularity. Providing an example of a club which, in his opinion, would exploit such a situation, he said: "Manchester United are only interested in Manchester United."

When asked whether Chelsea - where the cheapest season tickets next season will be around £525 - was an expensive place to watch live football, Bates said: "It is, because we are the most expensive club in the country to run." Geoffrey Vos, QC, representing the OFT, then suggested that if clubs were

allowed to negotiate individual television deals, broadcasters would be able to show games to viewers at home who cannot afford to attend matches. Vos asked Bates if he agreed that some supporters could not afford tickets. "They can afford to attend but they can't get the tickets because the games are so popular," Bates said. "Poverty among football fans is greatly exaggerated." When pushed on the point that there might be supporters so genuinely poor that they cannot afford football tickets, Bates said: "They are a minority that it's not worth taking into consideration [in this case]."

When asked whether he had been approached last year by Media Partners (the Milan-based company which was planning an elite European super league) Bates confirmed that he

had been involved in negotiations with the company, but said that he had made it clear that his club would only take part if they could also remain in the Premier League. His club was concerned, he said, about the well-being of the game as a whole.

Bates later cited an informal organisation of League clubs, which he said was formed in the early years of the revamped top flight and was known at the time as the "Platinum Club." He said this organisation of six "big" clubs - including Arsenal but not Chelsea - had wanted to influence the way the League was run for their own gain, but that their plans had come to little in the face of opposition from the majority of other clubs. "There are [still] a number of clubs in the Premier League who don't give a damn about anybody else," he added.

Asked about current League football on television - 60 live Sky games and highlights on the BBC - Bates said: "I regard it as satisfactory and I would not like to see it increased." He added: "If you overexpose any sport, it ultimately gets killed off... The spectators [watching at grounds] are to be considered the most important and the couch potatoes must come second."

Bates conceded that League football on pay-per-view television was inevitable at some stage in the future. "The Premier League wants to make sure it [pay-per-view] doesn't become the tail that wags the dog," he said. He added that one pay-per-view experiment, suggested by Sky, had already been rejected while the implications, including revenue distribution, were considered. The case continues.



Brad Davis reveals the poster yesterday Andrew Varley

Super League's steamy appeal

RUGBY LEAGUE officials yesterday brought a whole new meaning to the phrase unveiling a new strip as they continued their drive to attract more female support to the game.

Cries of "off, off, off" were once used solely by supporters to send errant players for an early bath. Now Castelford's Brad Davis may find they take on a whole new meaning when he embarks on the new Super League season in a fortnight's time.

For in a bold new poster campaign, the Australian half-back is shown taking an after-

RUGBY LEAGUE

BY NICK RIPPINGTON

match shower while a slogan issues a Full Monty style invitation to the sport's female followers: "Ladies, if you like your entertainment hot, you'll love it Super League style."

The daring shot follows last year's successful "Beef Back on the Bone" poster in which naked Halifax hooker Paul Rowley was pictured holding a rugby ball in fig-leaf fashion.

The Super League's marketing manager, Ian Riddoch, revealed the naked ambition be-

hind the plan yesterday when he said: "No other sport actively targets females. Traditionally we have had a male audience but we think since Super League started, more and more women are following the elite competition, and we want to build on this."

The League, which kicks off on the weekend of 5 to 7 March, is also to be featured in cinema commercials later this month.

The campaign has been dubbed "hot and steamy" by the organisers who are confident that the action will live up to the billing when it gets under way. Bulls appeared, page 25

THE INDEPENDENT

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Lock 'em up – an easy mantra but a flawed policy

WE DO not have to subscribe to the grotesque tabloid fantasy of a nation stalked by hordes of psychopaths and child molesters to recognise the genuine concern that has been aroused in the public mind by recent cases like that of Michael Stone, who was jailed last year for the murder of Lin and Megan Russell. During his trial it emerged that Stone had told a nurse five days earlier about his violent fantasies, and had asked to be admitted to hospital. Because he was deemed "untreatable" he could not be admitted under existing legislation and was refused a place, with tragic consequences. The release of known "predatory" paedophiles who remain a danger to children after their release from prison also raised a legitimate concern. The Government was right to respond to the public's desire that "something must be done".

Now we know what that something is – lock 'em up. The Home Secretary wants to introduce a "third service" which will allow, in effect, the indefinite detention of people diagnosed with non-treatable personality disorders even if they have not been convicted of a crime. There is an obvious argument for those such as Michael Stone to be securely detained, although even in such apparently clear-cut cases, appropriate safeguards such as regular reviews need to be retained. "Third service" is not, in and of itself, an unacceptable proposal. What is highly doubtful is that the policy will be a practical success.

The effectiveness of the "third service" will depend almost entirely on the resources it is granted. Health professionals in the front line implementing the policy will be faced with an impossible task – to determine, on evidence that is often far from overwhelming, that an individual should be committed to secure accommodation.

One obvious factor is that some of those who ought to be placed in secure accommodation will not, like Michael Stone, be begging to be incarcerated, but will go out of their way to evade the attentions of the "third service".

Those who do find themselves being attended to by the new policy may easily be the wrong people. Mental health experts suggest that perhaps 10 per cent of all Britons suffer from a personality disorder at some time in their lives. That represents a vast range of genuine and distressing sicknesses. Mental illness is often intermittent. It is sometimes associated with great verbal but little physical violence. It is, in short, all too easily prone to "dustbin diagnosis" by hard-pressed professionals.

Our mental health service has long been starved of the resources it needs to care for those in the community, in hospitals and in prisons. To be asked to provide the third service with few extra resources is absurd. The Government is "doing something", but we should be clear that that something is unlikely to prevent future tragedies.



Mr Flint has a point: it is time to 'drop debt'

CONSIDERING THE physical abuse which the front man of Prodigy has perpetrated on the rest of his body, an additional tattoo may not seem much of a mark of seriousness. And yet the news that Keith Flint is having the words "Drop the Debt" needed across his back for tonight's Brit Pop Awards is, in its way, a significant event.

Flint is in good company. The Pope is of like mind (on the issue of cancelling Third World debt; not, so far as we know, on the matter of tattooing). John Paul II had it high on the agenda of his private conversations with the Archbishop of Canterbury in the Vatican at the weekend. And the notion that the debts are unpayable is shared by increasing numbers of economists and politicians. There will be plenty who dismiss the Jubilee 2000 campaign – and its backing by music industry luminaries from David Bowie to Robbie Williams, and from Luciano Pavarotti to Catatonia – as simplistic idealism. If the call were to cancel all debt, that might be so. But the appeal is radically to extend the consideration of debt relief on a country-by-country basis, so that conditions remain tough for corrupt places such as Nigeria, but are eased substantially for poor countries, such as Uganda and Mozambique, which are struggling under burdens that are contrary to natural justice.

All this is eminently realistic, especially since the change of government in Germany has ousted the old intransigents in Bonn. For the problem has always been one of political will rather than economic feasibility – and campaigns by pop stars have an important part to play in creating the kind of public will which politicians cannot ignore. They will then have the impetus to overcome the over-cautious reservations of those bureaucrats in the Bundesbank. If that can be done the other main objectors, the Japanese, will fall into line, since they hate being isolated within the G8.

More than that, a suitable mechanism exists in the Highly Indebted Poor Country Initiative. This was introduced by the rich nations three years ago and was the first comprehensive debt relief scheme. But the levels set were niggardly, and hedged around with unnecessarily restrictive conditions and thresholds. These need to be relaxed substantially to produce relief that is far faster and much greater than at present. A shift is also needed in the strategy of the IMF and the World Bank, which currently encourage Third World economies to shrink and stagnate whereas they need to be helped to grow and diversify.

Done properly, this would go a long way towards meeting the levels of poverty alleviation that the rich nations have said should be achieved by 2015. That might be a bit later than the millennium cancellation which Keith Flint and his fellows are calling for. But at least he would get a bit more mileage out of the tattoo.

Must we forget our principles and surrender to mob rule?

IF A poll were taken of the best-known four words in English political philosophy, the phrase "nasty, brutish and short" would certainly win. Thomas Hobbes, writing in the wake of the Civil War, believed that only law and an agreed sovereign power stood between savagery and a return to natural savagery. Three centuries later, William Golding in *Lord of the Flies* expressed a similar pessimism about what happens when there is a return to pre-civilisation – in the case of boys, at any rate. Regrettably no one has written the obvious sequel, "Lady of the Flies", in which 20 girls are marooned on a desert island. In this version Piggy is not shoved off a cliff and killed, but subjected instead to endless makeovers.

For years I thought the Golding-Hobbes outlook a pessimistic one, designed – who taught alongside *Animal Farm* and 1984 in the school examination syllabus – to convince would-be radicals of the futility of their cause. Suggest about with the system, these works together seemed to say, and the next thing you know, there'll be pigs' heads on sticks all along the North Circular.

It was the head of Nwankwo Kanu that many from Sheffield wanted to mount last Saturday afternoon (and please could those with no interest whatsoever in football stick with me for this bit?). Mr Kanu, a new midfielder with Arsenal Football Club, was apparently not apprised of the convention governing injuries to players. It has become the practice (almost universally observed) that if one side wants medical attention for one of its men, it kicks the ball out of play, and the physio then trots on and dispenses anaesthetic spray and limited massage. When this battlefield treatment is complete the opposing team then resumes play by throwing the ball back to the hurt player's team.

This little bit of sportspersonship allows play to be stopped as soon as the teams themselves believe that one of their number requires treatment; but – not being a law of the game – it is clearly fragile. On Saturday, when Arsenal played Sheffield United in the FA Cup, and with the score at 1-1, Mr Kanu got hold of the ball after it had been thrown back towards the Sheffield goalkeeper, and passed it to another Arsenal player – who scored.

2-1. Up roar. Mayhem. Bad language. The referee, Peter Jones, said that the goal stood, and the Sheffield coach then tried to persuade his team to walk off the pitch and conclude the match. The game was resumed only after 10 minutes' delay, and Arsenal duly won. A bad show. Except that the Sheffield goalkeeper, and passed it to another Arsenal player – who scored.

This was remarkable (and commendable) enough. But what was really surprising was that the Football Association, within an hour of the final whistle, should agree to such a proposition. Immediately everyone rushed to congratulate the moribund Association on its sensible accommodation to popular sentiment.

Well, in fact not everyone. On BBC's *Match of the Day*, the pundit Alan Hansen – one of British soccer's most intelligent products – disagreed (though he was outnumbered two to one). He wondered where such flexibility would lead: what other situations might occur? And Philip Don, the spokesman for League referees, was also worried. "A very dangerous precedent has been set," he said. "The referee is there to control a game according to the rules, which state that whoever scores the most goals wins... Laws are there to be implemented and the match officials do that. In this instance, the referee has awarded the goal and it should stand."

Their doubts were given short shrift. "Purists will argue," opined the *Observer*, "that the FA has undermined the authority of officials – but that is stuff and nonsense."

But it isn't. It was interesting to me that this bit of pre-emptive populism on the part of the FA was linked to the way in which the Hoddle business was handled. On both occasions, it was suggested, the FA had shown itself to be a decisive and strong organisation by daring to take tough action swiftly. But I believe that – on the contrary – both decisions were the product of a cowardly desire to palliate "public opinion" (aka journalistic conventional wisdom), rather than stand firm and take a position of principle.

Of course, such a position can be described as elitist. Political and social elites feel themselves to be threatened by mobs, and the democratic impulse scares them. Since the rules generally favour those minorities with wealth and power, they seek to preserve them. But this is, as many have pointed out, an age in which we are witnessing the death of deference. When Diana, Princess of Wales died popular sentiment caused the flag to be flown at half-mast on Buckingham Palace. The political elite was likewise defeated over Nolan. Those who have stood against such changes have seemed like Oscar Wilde's Lady Bracknell, always warning that tiny changes in minor conventions resemble "the worst excesses of the French Revolution".

Cultural elites equally feel offended by popular culture. In last week's *New Statesman* Suzanne Moore (late of the *Vanessas* and the *Killroys*). "The world of talk shows frightens the horses," she said, "because it is a world of feeling, disclosure, excess, purging..." But she asked, "who can say that those who are there to spill the beans don't feel better afterwards?" The elite may be discomfited, but the people are happier because they get what they want.

I don't believe this either, and I loathe these programmes and their vulgarity, and the lack of ambition they have for ordinary people. And that could be, once again, because I am a member of an elite. But it is worth remembering who else feels themselves put at hazard whenever sentiment, and not law or intellect, governs. I'm talking here about minorities, for whom the law is the guarantor of rights in bad times. For those who may not always be popular, the laws that govern how others may behave to them should be as little subject as possible to cootage or arbitrary change. Sticking the word "people's" in front of something does not – as they discovered in eastern Europe – confer moral superiority.

Already the minor hole opened by the FA in the fabric of its own rules threatens to become a nasty rip. Sheffield fans want the replay to be held at their ground; they want the same weakened Arsenal team to be fielded; they want their money refunded from the original game; they want the proceeds to go to charity. Yet other fans, recalling similar incidents from previous matches, stand ready to demand similar flexibility to be shown, should something untoward happen to their team. What about those disallowed goals when the ball did cross the line, those penalties that should/should not have been given, that sending-off that was manifestly unfair? Shout, shout at the ref, shout at the FA, get the papers on your side. Shove that pig's head on that stick.

DAVID AARONOVITCH
The minor hole opened by the Football Association in the fabric of its own rules may become a nasty rip

QUOTE OF THE DAY
"Why does Printon need to be a madhouse like everywhere else?"
Terry Allen, a councillor in Frinton, after a planning application was put in for the town's first pub

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY
"A bore is a man who, when you ask him how he is, tells you."
Bert Taylor, American writer

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THERE ARE two things to celebrate here. One is the self-destruction of the right wing and its willingness to take the entire Republican Party down with it. The other is something that would have seemed unthinkable a year ago when the Monica Lewinsky story broke: the relative sophistication of the public's insistence that private sexual behavior is not a gauge of how well an elected official does his job.

Salon Magazine (Internet)

MONITOR

ALL THE NEWS OF THE WORLD
American comment after the end of the trial of President Clinton

modern president we can admire, it is this idea which our politicians must rediscover. *Houston Chronicle*

LET'S HOPE the president realizes that the independent counsel law must be used with restraint and limited to abuses of power and authority. The perceived unfairness of the Republican attacks played an

important role in his acquittal. If he engages in a vendetta against Republicans that voters perceive as unfair, public opinion could turn on him. The nation needs no more of the partisan divisiveness that has characterized the last six years. Clinton and the Congress need to find some common ground and work together on the business of the people rather than continuing the partisan warfare. *Daily Southtown*

THE PUBLIC does indeed want Washington to move ahead with the nation's business. Mr Clinton should be sorry that his actions distracted the nation from its goals. President Clinton will be held accountable for his lies and evasions by history. If he seeks vindication through political revenge, he will be judged all the more harshly as will his immediate political successors by the American people. *Detroit News*

PANDORA

PANDORA HAS often wondered whether you need more luck than talent in order to present a TV show. Viewers of Channel 4's *Powerhouse* political programme may have noticed that Charlie Whelan's guest presentation last week went like a spinning top – the wooden variety, that is. However, since no presenter can do more than a week's guesting on the show, viewers will be spared more stilted posturing from Gordon Brown's former press supremo. Or will they? It is interesting to note that the programme editor of the show is Andrew Brown, brother of Gordon. Would this coincidence explain how Chucky got his job in the first place?

THE FASHIONABLY discreet Portobello Hotel in London, where in their romantic days Johnny Depp and Kate Moss enjoyed a champagne bath, is getting a little self-conscious about guests booking into the hotel on their own. The hotel has introduced measures to get guests into more of a sociable mood. Visitors will have a chance of enjoying games of solitaire and backgammon, together with a little under par.

PANDORA COULDN'T help noticing the lack of communication between Sir Edward Heath and the political commentator Hugo Young, who were placed next to each other at last Sunday's *House Magazine*/Channel 4 Political Awards for 1998. Despite their shared passion for the European ideal, the pressure of their both being up for Political Book of 1998 kept them silent. Hugo Young once described Heath's memoirs, *The Course of My Life*, as "a book that did not need to exist". Perhaps it would have been more convenient if it had not existed, as Heath's book went on to win the award.

WILL HUTTON has told *Anticipations*, the journal of the Young Fabians, about who he would like to see leading the Labour party after Tony Blair. "I'd like it to be a woman, Tessa Jowell, just but if it's got to be a man, Charles Clarke." Hutton goes on to say: "I've ruined their reputations now, haven't I?" Perhaps not, Charles Clarke, now an education minister and formerly head of Neil

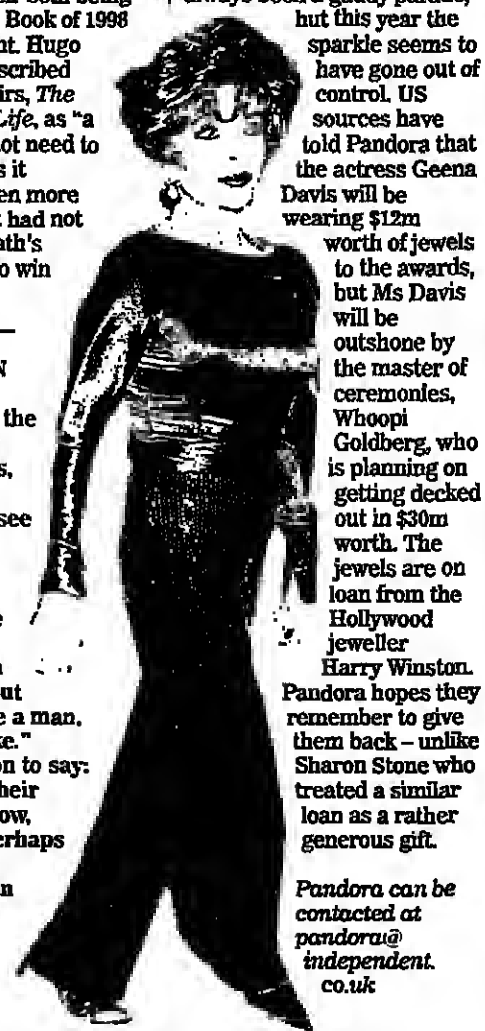
Kinnock's office, told Pandora: "Will Hutton has shown himself to be an interesting economic analyst but a less perceptive political pundit."

SPEAKING of hotels, a new and very unusual hotel opens for business, in London, at the beginning of March. 112 Harley Street will be the first boutique hotel to offer complete nursing care. It will have only 15 bedrooms, all luxuriously designed by the interior decorator Kelly Hoppen, with food cooked up by Richard Shakespeare. Pandora now knows where to convalesce after her cosmetic surgery – but with room prices reaching £1,200 a night, this hotel will not act as an overflow for NHS patients, and they have no intention of accepting Bupa or PPP payments.

AT THE Mayfair Club, in London, Björk, Keith from Prodigy, Michelle Collins, Robert Carlyle and Natalie Imbruglia were all part of the celebrity set who had shown up for the Saturday night at the former strip joint. While the beautiful people got ready for some Valentine romance, a sleek Mercedes pulled up outside and two very glamorous-looking women stepped out in search of some action. After looking at the queue, however, they decided to leave – much to Pandora's disappointment. The women in question? Joan Collins (pictured) and Rod Stewart's former wife, Alana Stewart.

THE OSCAR ceremony has always been a gaudy parade, but this year the sparkle seems to have gone out of control. US sources have told Pandora that the actress Geena Davis will be wearing \$12m worth of jewels to the awards, but Ms Davis will be outshone by the master of ceremonies, Whoopi Goldberg, who is planning on getting decked out in \$30m worth. The jewels are on loan from the Hollywood jeweller Harry Winston. Pandora hopes they remember to give them back – unlike Sharon Stone who treated a similar loan as a rather generous gift.

Pandora can be contacted at pandora@independent.co.uk



Confessions of a media whore



TERENCE BLACKER

I once appeared on Live TV. I cannot say I am proud of myself, but these things happen.

Unfortunately, they have happened rather too often. There was the discussion about dishwashers on a "my favourite things" phone-in for Talk Radio. There was being photographed with a hen on my head for a "Me and My Pets" magazine column. There was a Sky TV commentary on the court battle between Joan Collins and her publishers. Only a matter of weeks ago, there

was a down-the-line interview about TV chefs for Radio Scotland.

One or two such moments could be put down to vanity, boredom and the excitement of entering the real world of studio lights and microphones and women with clipboards who call you by your first name. But, taken together, a pattern of media promiscuity begins to emerge, the sort of problem that could usefully be probed on one of the nuts-and-sluts daytime TV shows (and yes, of course, on which I would be available to appear).

What causes this inability to say no to the humblest researcher working for the tawdriest programme? The first rule of publicity, drummed into every new writer, is that an inch of feature coverage about the author is worth a foot of reviews for his work.

The pay-off for all this low-rent punditry, it is argued, will be in the fiction departments of bookshops across the country, where potential book-buyers will be saying to themselves: "Hang on. Wasn't that the man talking bollocks about Fergie's posing with a chicken on his head/discussing dishwashers with Anna

Raeburn? That settles it – I'll buy his novel."

A harmless delusion, you may think. The author is rescued from his desk. The TV researcher knows that, unlike the losers who sometimes have to be impersonated by actors, writers are always ready to fill up air time. But now the tyranny of personal publicity has pushed the process one step further. Last month, the BBC announced that they were looking for four novelists for a documentary about the creative process. Once a week, a film crew would visit each of them to see how their work was developing.

Suddenly it is not enough merely to write, and be judged upon the words you have produced. The activity of writing is an essential component in the promotional package. Two new writers, Josie Lloyd and Emily Rees, recently played the game to perfection by not only writing a novel together – in itself more interesting than any solitary act of creation – but by falling in love and getting married as they wrote. Inevitably, they were invited on to *The Vanessa Show*, where they sat, hand in hand, discussing the

romantic excitements of the literary life. In the same spirit, novelists eagerly contribute to "How I write" columns in the press. One literary journalist has bravely, if unwisely, taken to reporting on the progress of this first novel, as if the act of creating this first novel has become more interesting and entertaining than the fiction itself.

The problem with all this is not just that, as John Osborne once pointed out, good writers are dull dogs, but that the better a novelist performs in a studio or in a light arts feature, the less likely he or she is to produce work of genuine interest or depth. Soon, the process of paying more attention to the life than the work has trivialising and vulgarising effect on the reader. Consider, to take an obvious example, the way the death of Iris Murdoch was covered in some quarters last week, and how much less attention was paid to her achievements as a novelist than to the tragic, and ultimately irrelevant, details of her final years.

Sometimes publicity provides not a window between the reader and an author's work, but a wall.

Why I'm quite happy to eat genetically modified food



CHARLES ARTHUR

Ignore your natural distrust of Government spin doctors' efforts to generate good publicity

"IT'S GOT beyond a joke," a biologist commented to me yesterday. "This really is frightening people. They have enough to be anxious about without worrying that they're going to mutate into lemmings by eating a piece of soy."

His reaction was typical of the scientists I have spoken to about the latest "row" over genetically modified crops and foods. Why the quotation marks? Because this latest twist in the debate is more artificial than a packet of prawn-cocktail flavoured crisps. There is not a single new fact, and certainly no fresh scientific data, that could advance either side's argument, pro or anti-genetic modification. You have only to witness the involvement of politicians such as John Redwood and Tony Blair – whose lives until now have been untouched by the need to discern between a gene, a ribosome and a protein – to know that once more the scientists are getting left out of a debate that is rooted in complex molecular biology.

We have seen this happen many times before, of course. Remember ecstasy? It periodically returns to the limelight as the Killer Chemical, despite apparently having a lower death rate per tablet consumed than many drugs available over the counter. But the calmer voices of scientists researching the effects of MDMA tend to get drowned out by the shouting of grieving parents and professionally indignant politicians. Or how about cannabis? When the researchers on a World Health Organisation committee drafted a report that pointed out that cannabis in fact had fewer harmful effects on people than either of those legal drugs alcohol and tobacco, the American government successfully pressed for that information to be left out of the final version. Politics intrudes, and it does so without

regard for the science and the facts. What does infuriate scientists about this latest version of the debate is that amidst all the Cabinet ministers, green lobbyists and worried vox-popped shoppers, there never seems to be room to explain what is in fact done to the plants or foods. It's easy to understand why: it sounds better to have a harassed Jack Cunningham on *The World At One* than a scientist explaining what an antisense gene or *Agrobacterium tumefaciens* virus is.

However, in terms of spreading knowledge, the difference is like comparing *The Vanessa Show* with the Open University. I spent last week moving house, and so was a passive consumer, rather than generator, of the media's output. Amidst all the back-and-forth of increasingly accusatory finger-pointing, I never once heard a piece of explanation that left me more informed about the underlying science.

So what then are we to make of the "debate" about genetically modified soy? Simply this: the US government is very keen to develop an

agribusiness that will allow one of its companies, Monsanto, to export a modern technology (for that is what the seeds are) to other parts of the world, especially Europe. When the first soy crop was grown in 1996, it nearly triggered a trade war because European governments wanted the soy to be at least separated, and at best labelled as genetically modified. That was what its regulations said.

The US said that any attempt to prevent American exports of soy would be treated as a trade barrier, and it would retaliate. Because the US is a net importer of so many European goods, that would have harmed us. The US is waving the same big stick this year over the banana trade. So if you wonder what's so great about modified soy, the answer is: nothing. Or at least, nothing that you profit from. It benefits the US to sell it to us.

Next, is it unsafe? Almost certainly not. The American regulatory regime is strict: new foods have to undergo rigorous testing for toxicity and other effects. If the US Food and Drug Administration thinks something is safe, it's very likely is. Ignore your natural distrust of the efforts of the Downing Street spin doctors to generate positive publicity for GM foods (with Tony Blair "doing a Gummer" in feeding them to his children).

Ignore, too, the experiments by Dr Arpad Pusztai on potatoes "modified" to contain poisons called lectins: the experiments were never completed, never examined by independent scientists ("peer-reviewed"), and never published. In that sense, they simply aren't science.

If scientists begin to publish their results, it's going to kill off science," said one disgruntled researcher, who was peripherally



Dr Arpad Pusztai: his experiments were never completed

involved in Pusztai's experiments. Just concentrate on the science of it, if you can. Right now, the science suggests it is safe: the genes don't make any magical leaps into your cells. And do not try spraying yourself with herbicide to see whether you've become resistant. It'll hurt.

However, in commenting on this topic, one caveat is obligatory: BSE. Were I writing this article 15 years ago about that disease, it would be easy to round up scientists prepared to swear that science could suggest no way by which the BSE agent (for it is not a bacterium or virus) could be transmitted to humans. Even eminent scientists, and non-eminent journalists like myself, held that view almost until March 1996, when Stephen Dorrell told Parliament that a number of deaths had been ascribed to exposure to the BSE agent.

What had happened? Science had moved on, and the population of Britain became part of a huge food experiment – resulting in the deaths so far of nearly 40 people. Similarly, our understanding of how the cell

produces proteins from genes is incomplete. Does the cell machinery treat some proteins differently from others, under some sets of circumstances? We don't know. Donald Bruce, a scientist who also specialises in ethical issues, said earlier this year: "Molecular biology is a teenage science. It's got to the stage where it has discovered techniques for a vast array of things with great excitement, but it hasn't yet hit the problems that other sciences have, that have made them humble in their approaches. Physicists are content to say what they don't know; biologists tend to say that everything is possible, because they haven't found out what isn't."

With that in mind, I personally don't mind eating food containing GM elements, but I also think there should be clear, unambiguous labelling. If I have to put my genes on the line for a minuscule, a theoretical risk in order to satisfy America's desire for the free trading of cashmere sweaters and bananas across the high seas, then at least I would like to know when I'm doing it.

Scotland is truly European



PODIUM

DAVID BEGG
From a lecture by the professor of economics at Birkbeck College, London, to the Royal Society of Edinburgh

IT IS no accident that the centralisation of Europe is taking place at the same time as greater devolution. Both are products of the same set of forces that is slowly undermining the sovereignty of nation states.

EMU will mean permanently fixed exchange rates between member states, and a single interest rate, set by the European Central Bank. The ECB is committed to the use of interest rates to maintain price stability: despite the austerity of the rhetoric, it will of course pay some attention also to the state of the business cycle, as central banks usually do. EMU membership will also entail participation in the Stability Pact to avoid excessive deficits.

Since Scotland is already a member of the monetary union called the UK, whose government is committed to low inflation and fiscal prudence, it might appear that exchange of the pound for the euro would make little difference.

This presupposes that Scotland is as closely integrated with Euroland as it is with the rest of the UK, which currently is not the case. A single monet-

ary policy works well when countries are similar, but creates stresses when countries have different structures and differing needs; this has, of course, fuelled some of Scotland's existing discontent.

A country out of kilter with the central monetary policy has essentially two resorts.

First, it can seek adjustment instead through labour market behaviour. This requires both flexibility and the skill to cope with change – not an easy combination; the competition that promotes flexibility in many cases also undermines incentives to train and invest.

Second, a country can rely on using its own fiscal policy to counteract its own problems. Many economists remain worried that the Stability Pact will prove too much of a strait-jacket to make this easy; nor is Scotland likely to have much fiscal flexibility within the existing framework for devolution.

However, EMU membership would at least protect Scotland from gross errors of fiscal judgement, most recently by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown.

Whatever the outcome within Euroland, the fact that for all European countries, including Scotland, trade mainly with one another would make effects via Europe's external exchange rate much less significant.

It is sometimes claimed that EMU is an ambush by euro federalists: an early crisis will spur moves of much deeper fiscal integration in order to reconcile national needs with the

single monetary policy. This view is probably mistaken, for two reasons.

First, gains to fiscal federalism are greatest when countries differ; when one is up, the other is down, and sharing provides mutual insurance. Paradoxically, the Maastricht convergence criteria, while good for the single monetary policy, have reduced the gains to fiscal integration.

Second, EMU is not an act in isolation: it is the consequence of many deeper and ongoing forces of integration within Europe. These forces will not go away, and may in time, perhaps quite soon, foster greater fiscal integration, but that will not be caused by EMU per se.

What lessons for Scotland the brave?

First, any notion of a separate monetary policy for Scotland should quickly be rejected. In today's global financial markets, this would simply introduce a new and unnecessary source of currency speculation.

Second, in many respects Scotland is much more truly European than its Sassenach neighbour, being more deeply committed to education, thrift,

investment, infrastructure and community. Paradoxically, Scotland to date has probably been hampered by English ambivalence, which has allowed the Irish tiger to benefit from English-speaking inward investment in search of a stepping-stone to Europe.

EMU entry, whether by the UK or by Scotland alone, would draw more effectively on some of Scotland's strengths.

Third, Scotland's peripheral geographic disadvantage, hitherto exacerbated by poor English infrastructure, will gradually diminish in importance as telecommunications develop further and Scotland's environmental assets may become significant not merely in tourism, but also in attracting and retaining workers in other industries.

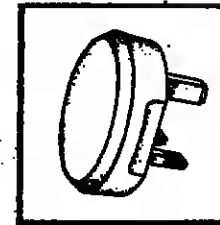
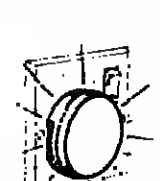
Finally, the mobility of goods, capital and even people makes true fiscal sovereignty an increasingly unrealistic aspiration for any small open economy within Europe.

Successful devolution must therefore be wise enough to pursue the transfer only of those fiscal powers over which sovereignty is feasible.

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America's record promoter



HAMISH MCRAE

Could it be that the impeachment process has increased American influence in the world?

THE BILL and Monica show is over at last. So what? A couple of weeks ago at the first session of the Davos forum, the international editor of a US magazine asked the assembled panelists whether the impeachment of the US President had had any impact on the power of the US in the world. All agreed that it had had none.

At the time, that seemed the only possible answer. It is certainly very hard to see any negative impact, for the US dominance of global politics seems as absolute as ever. But since then a further thought has struck me: could it be that the impeachment process has, if anything, even increased American influence in the world? Influence is, of course, a more diffuse, abstract concept than power, but arguably it has become the more important one. We are in a world where "soft power" – the ability to imbue people in other countries with your ideas, values and objectives – has become more important than "hard power" – dropping bombs or sending gunboats.

If the idea that the impeachment of a US president should have increased America's influence seems preposterous, consider these two facts. First, during the last year this newspaper has devoted a higher proportion of its foreign coverage to American affairs than at any time since it was founded 12 years ago. Second, this higher profile for the US has come at just the moment when there is a new, US-dominated communications technology available to project American influence, the Internet.

For good or ill, the US has a higher profile in the world than ever before and, in part, we have Bill Clinton to thank for that.

The shift of emphasis from hard power to soft power is so recent that we are still coming to terms with it. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the US has for a decade completely dominated the world in a military sense: it is the sole superpower. But the US rarely deploys that power and when it does, by far example, bombing Iraq, the results are mixed. However, during that same period US dominance has increased in other ways. There has been the gradual switch of the



Bill Clinton with the UK pop band All Saints: the genius entertainer himself gives a helping hand to others

Reuters

world to the Anglo-Saxon model of market capitalism (which is really the American one), a switch given new impetus by the evident weakness of the alternative East Asian model. There has been the export of American ideas of business management to European companies – including its more brutal facets, witness the sackings of the two top executives at BMW. There has been the global adoption of US standards for personal computers and the Internet. There has been the explosion of Hollywood products (and the export of Hollywood values) to the rest of the world.

And there has been the exporting of President Clinton's approach to communications. Just as, in the Eighties, the British Tories had a big idea that swept the world – privatisation – so in the Nineties the US Democrats have had a big idea that is also sweeping the world. There isn't yet a single word for it, but let's call it "opinion poll democracy", for one of its key elements is fitting what a politician says, and the tone in which he or she says it, to the current mood of the electorate.

Thus a set of ideas and expressions developed by Clinton have been exported first to Britain, where Tony Blair has been a star student.

In fact he has been more than that: he has become the messenger, taking the Clinton model and packaging it into a product that can be exported further, to Germany and beyond. Blair modelled his political approach on Clinton; several young Labour party brains behind the last election worked in (and watched) the original Clinton campaign. Many of the Labour slogans – eg "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime" – were dead ringers for Democrat ones.

Most important of all, though, is the tone. You can be unkind about this and note the faux humility, the earnestness, the mock "ordinariness" (this from a millionaire US Rhodes scholar and a millionaire British public schoolboy), the lipbiting when things go wrong, and so on. But not only is it devastatingly successful; it is a sight more attractive than the pomposity and uncoiled arrogance of earlier generations of politicians.

Of course, some other politicians are not so good at it. Gerhard Schröder presented himself as a German Blair but was less credible than his more youthful mentors. Besides, he dyes his hair. In Japan the leader of the Democrats, the main opposition party, Naoto Kan, has

been dubbed Blair-san. His party of fices have the same "advertising agency" feel as Labour's campaign HQ in Millbank Tower, and the advertisements mimic those of the US Democrats and New Labour. But though he tops the polls as Japan's most popular politician, pure popularity in Japan has to be buttressed by an effective political machine and the party has yet to make a breakthrough there. However, he may make it in the future.

If Clinton's successful election and re-election have had a profound influence on democratic politics elsewhere, will his recent escape from having to pay the price for a scandal do likewise? I think it will. Expect politicians in trouble everywhere (and I mean different sorts of trouble from Mr Clinton's) to adopt a similar defence. Apologise to voters, crave forgiveness, be very, very humble at the appropriate moment (but not for too long), and meanwhile watch every nuance of the opinion polls to fine-tune policies to meet the perceived fears and hopes of the electorate. This is what people want.

Or at least it is what people want while the good times roll. America's rising influence in the world is partly the result of the pol-

itical triumph of its President, but to a greater extent it is a result of the success of the American economy. Of course, in one sense the two are related: were the economy in recession, Mr Clinton would hardly be the most popular president since the Second World War. But the relationship works only one way. Neither Mr Clinton nor the Democrats are responsible for the explosion of entrepreneurship and new technology that is driving the US economy forward.

Mr Clinton has unintentionally created additional global interest in the US. But it is American business that, with perhaps a little help from the Federal Reserve, has been responsible for the eight-year-long boom. Insofar as business people in the US are political at all, they tend to vote Republican. When the boom ends, as it surely will, people may adopt a different tone to the current indulgent one.

In that sense, the big idea of Mr Clinton's politics may prove less durable than the big idea of Mrs Thatcher's privatisation.

But the exporting of American business culture, ideas and values will, I am sure, continue, because the US is the only country in the world that has developed a suc-

cessful exportable popular culture.

This is relevant to Britain, for we benefit as the principal sub-contractor to the US entertainment industry. Our own cultural exports are booming – they are the fastest-growing segment of our invisible exports, which are now second only to those of the US in size. But we ride on the back of American funding and distribution. We can do the creative side stunningly well, but we seem unable to do the business side.

That is all right. The US information and entertainment industries will race on. US technology, in particular its pioneering of new uses for the Internet, will also race on. The world will remain tremendously interested in America.

Just as Mr Blair has, so to speak, developed the export version of the Clinton political model, so our own creative industries will continue to help some of the fastest-growing parts of US economy to sell their wares to the rest of the world. In return, we will also get access to the US market for our home-produced creative exports.

So, if Mr Clinton wants to help All Saints sell more records in the United States, then we should be grateful. He is a genius of an entertainer himself.

RIGHT OF REPLY

ELISABETH MURDOCH



The managing director of Sky Networks responds to a recent article by Andrew Neil

ANDREW NEIL'S reminiscences on the birth of Sky 10 years ago are fascinating. He reminds us of the hostility and sneers that we received from the broadcasting establishment. What a contrast with today, as broadcasters such as the BBC, Channel 4 and Channel 5 embrace the digital revolution, and are carried on Sky's digital platform.

However, I take issue with his criticism of our commitment to original programming. He says that Sky is yet to make its mark as a producer of British-made shows, and hemoans a failure to invest in programming. His criticisms are out of date.

Last year we began a new initiative dedicated to the creation of original British programming. On Sky One, our output of commissioned programmes has quadrupled. Our Uncovered franchise hasn't just beaten ratings records for us; it has broken existing conventions by selling to Channel 4 – a rare case of product moving from satellite to terrestrial. Our teen soccer soap, *Dream Team*, has won a prestigious Broadcast award. Our first major entertainment commissions are hitting the screen.

Sky Pictures will make theatrical-quality feature films, designed to run first on our movie channels. Over the next two years, £20m will be invested in creating 12 pictures. Principal photography has been completed on our first three – *Tube Tales*, *Milk*, and *Best* – featuring British talent such as Dawn French, Bob Hoskins, John Lynch and Ewan McGregor, and giving stars such as Denise Van Outen their film debut.

Sky is now in a position to offer viewers genuine quality choices in any genre of TV. The effect is to keep all broadcasters on their toes and to offer greater choice and quality for all.

The death of the Jewish dream

THE JEWISH world was shattered for ever on 4 November 1995. Yigal Amir, photographed grinning after the murder of Yitzhak Rabin, sits unrepentant today in an Israeli jail. Outside the prison, his birthday is celebrated with champagne by his fanatical supporters. Israel has still not come to terms with the gunning down of its prime minister. Does the fracture between secular Tel Aviv, and orthodox Jerusalem and the occupied territories, mark the beginning of a suicidal split that will end in civil war?

In this book, Michael Karpin and Ina Friedman are circumspect. They build up a detailed analysis of a violent subculture which has permeated into the mainstream and still threatens Israeli democracy. In the struggles leading up to independence in 1948, Jew had already assassinated Jew. Amir's act of murder was not provoked by a small



TUESDAY BOOK

MURDER IN THE NAME OF GOD: THE PLOT TO KILL YITZHAK RABIN
BY MICHAEL KARPIN AND INA FRIEDMAN
GRANTA, £13.99

faction of extremists, but was completely representative of Jewish orthodoxy's latent mob rule.

According to Karpin and Friedman's research, Amir was urged to murder by racist rabbis. These Jewish zealots detest secular Israel and yet are happy to live off its benefits. Their children do not at present go into the army, and they form the bulk of the non-working population. They also pay lower taxes than secular Israelis.

The strength of this report is the detailed political, religious and per-

sonal mosaic built up as background to Amir's "messianic" mission. It shows how he fits into the wider religious terrorism nourished in right-wing seminars. The authors reveal the hardly known concepts of *din rodef* and *din moser*, by which obsolete religious laws are revived, permitting the murder of a Jew who imperils the lives of other Jews.

Orthodox rabbis began to reinstate these antiquated ideas to justify murdering Rabin after the Oslo peace accords. Thus they cancelled the sixth commandment: "Thou shalt not kill." Religious pressure to oppose the democratic state insidiously influenced the volatile factions and, when married to the opportunistic ambitions of the secular right, resulted in the fatwa threatening Rabin. A year before the assassination, a photograph of Benjamin Netanyahu, then Likud chairman, marching in front of a coffin painted with the words "Rabin is murdering Zionism". Rabinised what was to follow.

Karpin and Friedman make a fascinating point. Amir was the perfect choice as assassin because of his Yemenite origins, his intensely religious education, and his tunnel vision. They chronicle how Amir was influenced by the legacy of Baruch Goldstein and the Hebron massacres, in which 29 Arabs were gunned down at prayer. Amir also met members of the racist Rabbi Meir Kahane's Kach group, seeing himself as Kahane's and Goldstein's disciple.

The authors blame the racist rabbis responsible for the education of



Rabin: mix of intelligence and political innocence John Voos

those who encouraged Amir's act. But they also note that, because Amir "has only scant knowledge of Western philosophy, the border between reason and emotion was blurred in his mind". Amir's progressively orthodox mother wanted an Ashkenazi mate but agreed to an arranged marriage with a fellow Yemenite. A "mixed" marriage might have given Yigal a pluralistic education, and Rabin might be alive today.

Yitzhak Rabin's intelligence and political innocence emerge throughout the book. He was seen at his election as Mr Security, and his pragmatic transformation into peacemaker scandalised the right and the religious groups. Ingeniously, Rabin chose to ignore the constant slanders, even though his opponents' murderous "free speech" endangered his life. On the eve of Yom Kippur, Kahane's disciples uttered death curses in front of the prime minister's residence. A month before the murder, images of Rabin in Nazi uniform were paraded in a demonstration headed by Netanyahu. Other photographs show him dressed as Yasser Arafat.

One of Rabin's greatest mistakes was neglecting his US supporters so that only his enemies' homicidal voices were heard. When his minister of culture, Shulamit Aloni (a left-wing,

pro-Palestinian feminist lawyer), spoke for the government at New York's 1995 Israel Day parade, a right-winger punched her in the stomach. She was still recovering from an abdominal operation. Indeed, the authors show how New York's racist orthodox mobilised Mayor Giuliani against the peacemakers and collected money to nourish the murderous Israeli seminars.

If there was naivety at cabinet level, there was also blundering in the security services. The authors reveal how an informer reported on Amir's confession that he was going to kill Rabin, then failed to follow it up. At the Peace Now demonstration where Rabin was killed, security guards spoke to Amir twice when he was spotted hanging about the car park, without arresting him.

This is an important book, which not only analyses the build-up to the most famous political murder in Israel but also alerts us to the dangers today. Will there be war between the Labourites and the secular right, supported by the Jewish rightwingers? Will peace with the Palestinians ever be allowed to grow? Fifty years after the birth of Israel, there seems little hope for the great secular Jewish dream.

JULIA PASCAL

THE INDEPENDENT PHOTOGRAPH



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Jaki Byard

ALTHOUGH HE was often at the forefront of creative playing, Jaki Byard played a wider range of jazz than anyone.

At the front his ground-breaking playing had an urgency and inventiveness that should have made him better known. But he was also able to play in the manner of James P. Johnson and the early stride pianists with such conviction that it seemed he became one of them. If he chose to be Erroll Garner or Dave Brubeck, then it was not possible to tell which was the original and which was Byard. He didn't just copy, he was able to invent in the way that they did, and this made him the music's most skilful forger, apart from one of its outstanding improvisers.

The series of small group and solo recordings Byard made for Prestige in the early Sixties was stunning. Perhaps it was because Prestige was not then a major label that his work didn't cause the sensation it merited. But he certainly rattled audiences world-wide with his power and dexterity when he joined the band led by the bassist Charlie Mingus in 1962.

It was strange that Byard had to make his name on Mingus's coattails. Mingus had a musical presence and power that pushed him into the ranks of the greatest composers with Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk, but he also showed a physical violence to his musicians that made working for him a daunting and hazardous experience. Byard put his finger on it. "To think over my years with Charles Mingus is to relive a panorama of rhythmic excitement, tranquillity, frustration, turbulence, love, hate, erratic social behaviour, political rhetoric and lots more."

Mingus usually made up his bands from his young protégés. But the group that Byard joined was made up of established veterans. They included the trumpeter Johnny Cole, and the reed and woodwind player Eric Dolphy. Dolphy was a true original of the avant-garde. The band's music was powerful and unpredictable. Despite the fact that some of the compositions in its concerts ran for half an hour or more, there was a consistency of inspiration in the programmes that has seldom been equalled.

Fortunately many of the concerts were recorded and 25 years on there

are still comparatively few jazz experiences that provide such exciting listening. These longer showcases pushed back the previous limits of bebop and gave the audiences a better chance to appreciate the individual styles of the musicians. Mingus's turbulent rhythms prevented any complacency and all the musicians continually played above themselves.

It was in these early years of the Sixties that Byard took a firm grip on the European jazz audience. The Mingus sextet toured Europe but didn't visit Britain. When the tour was over Dolphy decided to stay in Europe, but died two months later. Byard left Mingus in 1965 to lead a unique quartet, but returned to work for the man he described as "a prominent bassist" for a period in 1970.

Byard was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, in 1922. His father

played the brass instruments. His next job was on trumpet, and he could also play guitar and tenor saxophone. In 1941 he resumed his piano studies with the Boston teacher Leonard Sachs, but soon afterwards he was called into the army. There he learned trombone and when he was discharged in 1944 continued his studies. "I picked up on all the other instruments for composition," he said. These were violin, cello, bass and the saxophones. Byard had always wanted to be a saxophonist, but his family had not been able to afford to buy him an instrument.

After two years in a band led by Ray Perry, with whom he recorded, Byard joined the band of the alto saxophonist Earl Bostic, who was then three years away from his smash hit "Flamingo". "My guys on piano were Bud Powell and Erroll Garner,

Eventually Byard had a disagreement with Pomeroy and left to play as a solo pianist at the Stables in Boston. He then formed a trio and found plenty of work in the local clubs. Blue Note Records wanted to record him, but also wanted to substitute New York musicians for his bassist and drummer, so Byard turned them down.

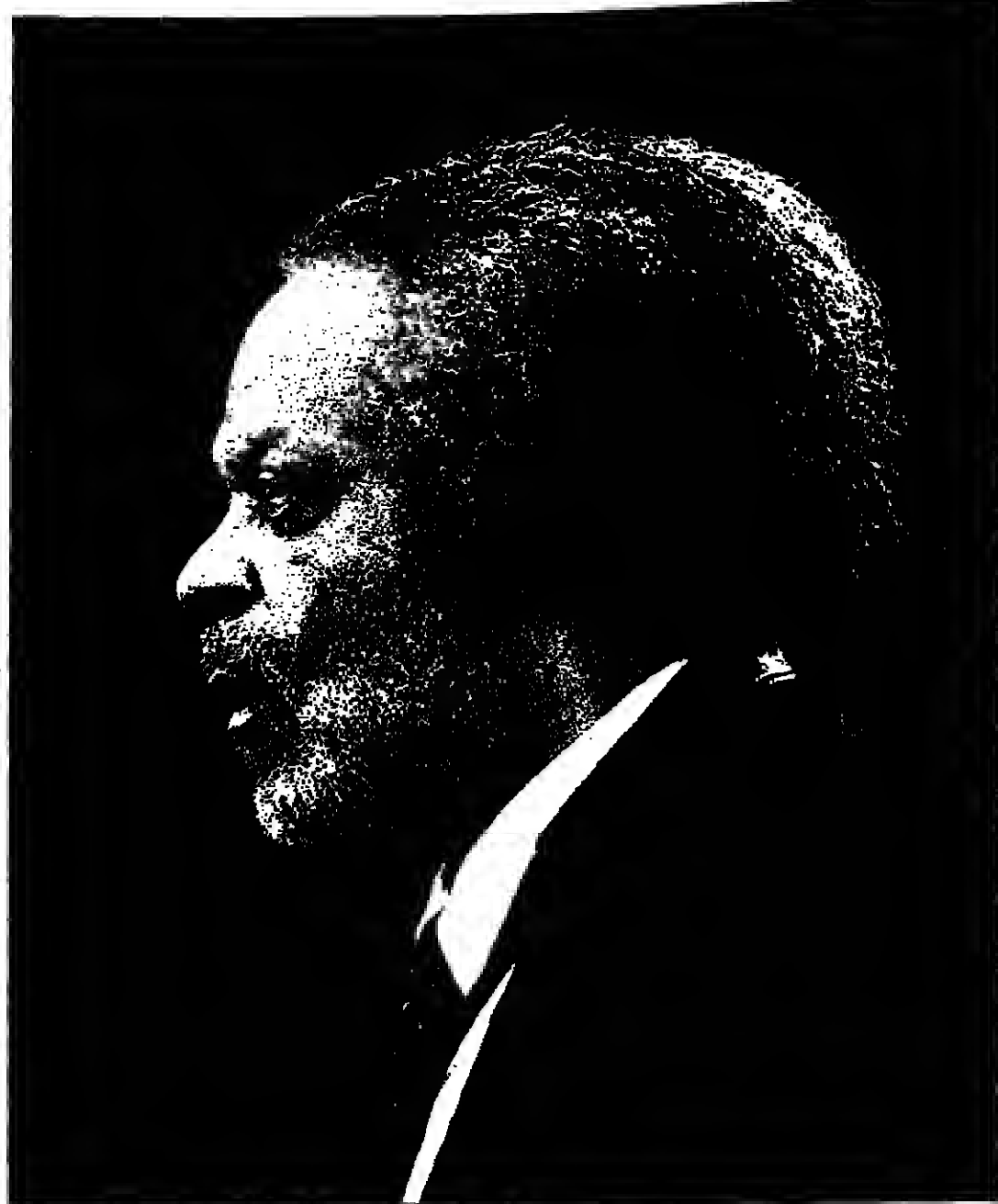
By now he was also an accomplished orchestrator. The band led by the trumpeter Maynard Ferguson that he joined in 1959 was well endowed with arrangers since Don Sebesky, Willie Maiden and Slide Hampton were in its ranks. "Maynard thought very highly of Jaki's arrangements," said Ernie Garside, an English trumpeter who later joined the band as sideman and manager. "They were very sophisticated, beautifully written out by Jaki, but we didn't play them often."

"It was a good experience working with the famous high-note trumpet player," said Byard, "but he wouldn't use any of my arrangements." Four of them were recorded, however.

Next came the years with Mingus. Byard's opinions of the bassist diverged. On one occasion he said, "Once you get to know him, he's really a gentle man. A cool person. He's a very soft man. It's unbelievable once you get to know him as a friend, he has a smile for you and all that." On another occasion: "I haven't got much to say about working with him. One of the reasons was exposure. But I can do without the dictator approach in music."

When he left Mingus, his prodigious talents now recognised, Byard continued to associate with other saxophone players, including the saxophone players Booker Ervin and Roland Kirk and trumpeter Don Ellis. His recordings proliferated in number and variety and in 1968 he made an album, *Jaki Byard With Strings*. His priority now became teaching, and he ran departments at several schools, including the New England Conservatory. From the late Seventies he led a 20-piece band, the Apollo Stompers, in Boston. At the same time he led a similar band of the same name in New York that recorded a somewhat uneven collection in 1984.

Byard visited Britain in 1981 and



One of jazz's outstanding improvisers

Peter Symes / Redferns

recorded here with the avant-garde pianist Howard Riley. In 1982 he made yet another collection of piano duets, this time with Ran Blake, another avant-garde musician. A later version of the Apollo Stompers recorded another album in 1988. The same year a return visit to London resulted in the CD *Jaki Byard and Howard Riley Live at the Royal Festival Hall*, and Byard came back to Europe with the Charlie Mingus Big Band, led now by another Mingus veteran, the trombonist Jimmy Knepper.

In 1991 Byard was invited to give one of a series of solo piano recitals

that was recorded in the Maybeck Recital Hall in San Francisco. He covered the gamut of his work. He played his own lengthy *Family Suite* and three compositions by Thelonious Monk, and reverted to the early stride pianists in his "Tribute to the Tinklers". He made few recordings during the Nineties and concentrated instead on his teaching at the Manhattan School of Music.

Appropriately his last recording, with the reed player Michael Marcus, *This Happening '96*, was greeted by a leading jazz magazine as "a beautiful recording of stunning

depth and feeling". The album is due for release in March.

"Don't mess with my music," he said with pride. "If you want to listen to it, listen; if you don't, don't. But don't tell me how to play."

He was found dead in the New York apartment where he lived with his daughters. He had been shot.

STEVE VOCE

John A. Byard, pianist, instrumentalist, composer, teacher; born Worcester, Massachusetts 15 June 1922; married (one son, two daughters); died New York 11 February 1999.

Major Tom Monaghan

ON 16 March 1944, crack spearhead troops of the Japanese 18th and 31st Divisions with their sights firmly on Delhi and the Indian Plain made an unexpected crossing of the River Chindwin. They then cut their way through dense jungle-clad mountain ranges with the intention of launching a surprise attack on the none too strongly manned Imphal and Kohima.

Unaware that they were in the path of a substantial enemy advance, Indian, Gurkha and British troops of the 50th Indian Parachute Brigade were on patroling exercise. On 19 March, Lt-Col Paul Hopkinson commanding 132 Indian Parachute Battalion informed his adjutant, Major Tom Monaghan, that at least a battalion of Japanese were advancing. It was the beginning of one of the bloodiest battles of the Second World War. It was also one of the most critical.

With casualties mounting the brigade commander, Tim Hope-Thompson, ordered all his battalions to hold the high ground at the Naga village of Sangshak. It was vital to delay the Japanese advance in order that Kohima and Imphal could be reinforced. Desperate for barbed wire and barely able to dig in to the rocky surface, isolated and unsupported apart from an occasional airdrop, the Indian Parachute Brigade, in appalling



'Leadership and cool courage'

ling conditions, held up the enemy advance for six days and nights, inflicting heavy casualties, but at considerable cost to themselves. Of the 27 officers in Monaghan's battalion, 13 were killed and nine wounded.

Heavy artillery that had been brought up by elephants continually rained down and counter-attack upon counter-attack took place. To add to the horror on the last night it rained. Water seeped everywhere, the wounded and dying slid into the mud and the floors of the operating dugout became a treacherous maw into which precious surgical instru-

ments and dressings were washed and finally disappeared. Monaghan recalled, "Casualties rose steeply. Shell fire disintegrated the shallow-buried dead and the stench of bitter warfare pervaded the whole area." This was battle at its most primitive and violent.

After six horrendous days of almost continuous fighting, 50 Indian Parachute Brigade were ordered to "fight their way out and return to Imphal". In the chaos of withdrawal, not all the wounded could be located. During the arduous journey to Imphal many died of their wounds. Of the 2,000 men who had held off two divisions, just over half made it. Later Lt-Col William Slim addressed a heartfelt "Special Order of the Day":

Your parachute brigade bore the first brunt of the enemy's powerful flanking attack, and by their staunchness gave the garrison at Imphal the vital time required to adjust their defences. To the officers and men of the 50th Indian Parachute Brigade I send my congratulations.

During the battle, while manning the wireless, Monaghan heard of the heroic actions of Lt Andrew Faul. He immediately reported this to his commanding officer who later tried to have the officer awarded a posthumous VC, but all the eye-witnesses had been killed. Incredibly, few medals were awarded for

this vital and costly action and no battle honour was granted.

Less than three months later, on 10 June, on the Ukul Road leading to Imphal, a Japanese unit held the high ground called the "Bastion". Tom Monaghan, now commanding the remnants of B Company 152 Indian Parachute Battalion, was ordered to clear the enemy. With the support of three tanks Monaghan organised the attack with considerable speed. Despite his company's being under heavy fire from machine-gun and grenade discharges he led the attack with considerable courage, and, although early on shot in the thigh, he inspired his men forward and was with them as the bayonet charge secured the hill. His citation for his Military Cross reads:

This officer's very fine leadership and cool courage were an inspiration to his men and to all who witnessed the action.

Monaghan was born in Dublin in 1920 and educated at the Duke of York's Royal Military School, Dover. When he was six his mother died of typhus and a year later he lost his father, who had fought in the First World War. He enlisted into the Royal Inniskilling Fusiliers in 1938, serving with them in France. He was evacuated with his regiment from Dunkirk, where his older brother was killed on his 21st birthday.

In 1940 he was commissioned into the Indian Army, where he volunteered for the newly formed 152 Indian Parachute Brigade and was appointed adjutant. He continued with the brigade until 1947 when he rejoined the Inniskillings in Lahore, where he commanded the Amritsar detachment of the battalion during the turbulent time of "partition". After several staff appointments he retired from the Army in 1954.

He went to Pakistan in 1955, where he managed hotels and then worked as a consultant on the construction of dams, waterways and power stations. In 1969 he returned to UK to work in administration.

Tom Monaghan was a rugged, handsome and charming man with a rich sense of humour. He had a lifelong interest in literature and theatre and appeared in several amateur productions. In his later years he was secretary to the Brentford Conservative Club and active with the Royal British Legion, who accompanied his coffin at his funeral.

MAX ARTHUR

Thomas Joseph Monaghan, soldier; born Dublin 24 September 1920; MC 1944; married 1946 Bridget Keays-Byrne (four sons, one daughter); died London 28 December 1998.

Elie Kagan

THE DETERMINED and adventurous photographer is not a very popular figure. He is usually seen as a menace; at best, a nuisance. It is ironic therefore that Elie Kagan is now being hailed as a great photographer precisely because he was determined and adventurous.

One episode involving Kagan has almost become a major event in French history. On 17 October 1961 there was a large demonstration of Algerians in Paris. Some 30,000 began a peaceful protest against the night curfew that had been imposed on them by the Prefect of Police. But they were attacked by the French police with extraordinary ferocity. Kagan was at the centre of the conflict, taking pictures. He seized every opportunity to photograph examples of police brutality and Algerian injury and death. Other photographers were present but none of them captured the intensity of the event.

With the police subsequently asserting that they had acted after they had been attacked by the Algerians (although the numbers of corpses recovered from the river Seine cast doubt on this), the publisher François Maspéro decided to publish an account of what had happened, using Kagan's photographs. But the police confiscated all the material and the book could not be produced.

The question of what exactly happened on 17 October 1961 has constantly been revived. In particular since Maurice Papon had been the Prefect of Police at the time, when he was put on trial in October 1997 for crimes against humanity committed during the occupation years, the issue of 1961 came up again. The administration had admitted to some 40 deaths but other estimates suggested at least 300. No progress was made then, nor subsequently have the archives been made satisfactorily available as promised.

October 1961 was an experience that Kagan never forgot. It was, he said, the painful return to his childhood. He was born in 1926, the son of poor immigrant Jewish parents, the mother Polish and the father Russian. He spent the year in hiding, living in terror. He emerged with the Liberation ready to celebrate and to protest.

He was naturally attracted to the Communist Party but equally naturally he did not accept all its ideas, nor was he prepared to accept its discipline. In 1948 he achieved a certain fame when he threw contraband at the Communist leader Maurice Thorez. It was after this that I met him. With some fellow-students, I went to a noisy celebra-

tion in a basement café off the Boulevard Saint-Germain.

I gathered that he was with the Communists since he was violently anti-American, but he saw no reason why anyone should be opposed to birth control, or why he had to accept the dictates of Jeannette Vermeersch, Thorez's companion, who condemned birth-control as an American perversion.

It was not until the 1950s that Kagan began to work as a photographer. He took pictures of student protests and of the anti-de Gaulle demonstrations of the 1950s and he came to an agreement with Louis Aragon, who published them in *Les Lettres Françaises*. But he already had the reputation of being difficult, insulting German tourists, picking quarrels, disagreeing violently with editors who published articles that he disliked. He had a formidable presence, with red hair and a bristly beard and it is not surprising that some of his colleagues were frightened of him.

He preferred to work alone. He did not collaborate with any agency, he never had a contract with a particular newspaper. His photographs were published in left-wing papers, such as *La Vie Ouvrière* and *Le Nouvel Observateur*, but he also worked for *Témoignage Chrétien* and *La Tribune Juive*.

At times Kagan was very short of money, obliged to go from newspaper to newspaper, desperate to sell his photographs. For many he was a nuisance, always indignant, never modernising his technique. He once was prevailed upon to write about himself, and published, with a co-author who was essential, Patrick Rotman, *Le Reporter Engagé* (1989). But never again.

He had many successes. He penetrated ministries that were supposedly under heavy guard. He caught Pierre Mendès France on 27 May 1968 on his way to the controversial anarchist meeting at Charité. He arranged to be photographed side by side with François Mitterrand, a picture that was used both for and against Mitterrand during his campaigns. In a different area he became friends with Jane Birkin and Serge Gainsbourg and took their pictures.

His last photographs were of the illegal immigrants in the Parisian Church of Saint-Bernard few months ago. He is said to have died in the same small apartment where he was born, in the 10th arrondissement.

DOUGLAS JOHNSON

Elie Kagan, photographer; born Paris 1926; died Paris c 24 January 1999.

Lucille Kallen

THE LIVE, 90-minute revue-style *Your Show of Shows* (1950-54) was described by the critic Kenneth Tynan as "a golden landmark in the wasteland of television comedy". The legendary writing team behind that prestigious series boasted a lone woman - Lucille Kallen.

Carl Reiner, who played supporting parts in the show as well as contributing many bright comedy ideas, described the dark, petite Kallen as "a real writer. Cute as a button, too."

Born in Los Angeles in 1932, Kallen was sent east to study classical music at the Juilliard School in New York, but abandoned her studies after being told that her fingers were too short for the piano. They were, however, an acceptable length for the typewriter, and she remained in New York to write an intimate revue.

In the audience one night was the showman Max Liebman, who had already launched the career of Danny Kaye. Impressed by Kallen's writing, Liebman invited her to join him at

Camp Tamiment, a large Jewish summer resort in the Pocono mountains of Pennsylvania, where he produced and directed the camp's musical shows. Throughout the summer of 1948 Kallen co-wrote a new revue every week. Her collaborator on the songs and sketches was Mel Tolkin, whose Eastern European accent was so impenetrable that she said it required "seven United Nations interpreters".

In 1949 Liebman entered television as producer of *The Admiral Broadway Revue*, with Tolkin and Kallen as his writers. The series starred a brace of Liebman discoveries: Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca. A year later Liebman, Kallen, Tolkin, Coca and Caesar were reunited for *Your Show of Shows*, with Mel Brooks and Larry Gelbart joining the writing staff.

During the work sessions (fiercely competitive shouting matches that Tolkin called "moh jobs"), Kallen would take down the best lines, adding her own after attracting the

men's attention. "I'd have to stand on a desk and wave my red sweater," she recalled. "Let's face it, gentility was never a noticeable part of our working lives. Max Liebman was fond of quoting a Goldwynism: 'From a polite conference comes a polite movie.'"

During the show's final season, Kallen became pregnant, an event which prompted Liebman to hire the Simon brothers, Neil and Danny. "Max brought us on until Lucille gave birth," Neil Simon recalled. "And so Danny and I were hoping for a three-year pregnancy." Shortly after the baby arrived, the show departed. Each of its two stars was offered a solo series, with Tolkin, Reiner, Gelbart and the Simons going into the Caesarian camp and Kallen and Brooks joining Coca. Although Caesar's *Hour* ran for three years, *The Imogene Coca Show* was a failure, and disenchanted with television, Kallen decided to turn her talents elsewhere.

She joined Tolkin in writing

Maybe Tuesday (1958), a play that had only a short Broadway run. On her own, she wrote *Outside There. Somewhere* (1964), a wry, semi-autobiographical novel about a female television writer battling to survive in a man's world. Neil Simon's 1994 play *Laughter on the 23rd Floor*, whose dramatic personae are based on the *Show of Shows* writing staff, modelled the character of Carol Wyman on Kallen. In Act Two, Carol tells the Caesar character: "After five years in here, you think I know what a woman's point of view is? I come home at night smelling from cigar smoke. I have to put my dress in a humidor. . . I don't want to be called a woman writer. I want to be called a good writer!"

In 1979 Kallen wrote *Introducing C.B. Greenfield*, the first of five witty mystery novels in which the publisher of a suburban newspaper solves a series of murders with the invaluable assistance of Maggie Rose, his star reporter. C.B. Green-



Waving a red sweater

field: no lady in the house (1982) bore the grateful dedication: "This one is for Max Liebman, who was a university where so many of those now acclaimed once learned craftsmanship."

DICK VOSEBURGH

Lucille Kallen, scriptwriter, lyricist and novelist; born Los Angeles 28 May 1922; married Herbert Engel (one son, one daughter); died Ardley, New York 18 January 1999.

Peter Whiston

OVER A period of nearly 30 years, the Scots architect Peter Whiston carved out a small but satisfying niche designing new churches of all denominations around Scotland. From the strong triangular prism of St Margaret's, Davidson's Mains, in Edinburgh, to the soaring parallel roofs of St Paul's, Muirhouse, Edinburgh, his designs combined bold post-war optimism with a belief in Scottish restraint.

Thus his materials were local stone, herring, pitch pine, even cobbles recycled from the streets of Edinburgh on which he had played as a boy. What decoration he allowed in his simple white churches, he commissioned from his contemporaries at Edinburgh College of Art: for example Stations of the Cross by the sculptor Vincent Butler, and a stone relief of Christ for the refectory at Nunraw Abbey by Anne Henderson.

Perhaps his most significant building is the Cistercian monastery at Nunraw in East Lothian, the first new monastery in Scotland since the Reformation. Sancta Maria Abbey was built by the monks themselves with voluntary help from all over Scotland. Irish builders and navvies would down tools on a Friday in Glasgow and climb on buses to Nunraw, where they would spend the weekend labouring for the sake of their souls and the good clean air. Sitting proud on the Lammermuir Hills, the monastery's Rattlebag stone walls can be seen from the Highlands.

Peter Whiston was a shy and rather private man: but to those few in whom he confided he had an interesting story to tell. He was born in 1912 in humble circumstances in a tenement in Leith. His formidable Irish mother encouraged him and the others in his large Catholic family to study and, to use an expression not often heard today, "to get on".

With an architect's eye he would describe the simple family home, up a stair, with a shared WC and no bathroom. The Edinburgh trams rattled their way down Leith Walk. He would talk of his mother taking the weekly washing to the steaming and on Saturdays the boys would watch the Hibernian Football Club. On Sundays Whiston served as an altar boy at the cathedral. Thus he would describe a typical Roman Catholic family in Scotland in the 1920s, and how apart they then were from the majority of Presbyterian Scots; and how that has changed today.

"Get on" is indeed what the family did. Whiston qualified as an architect paying his way, and that of one of his brothers, through college with scholarships and national prizes such as the RIBA Silver Medal. By study alone



Optimism and restraint: Whiston's St Margaret's Church, Davidson's Mains, in Edinburgh, 1952

the family of seven produced two architects, one orthopaedic surgeon, one director of medical services, one GP, one lecturer in theology and one nursing sister.

He served in the Royal Engineers during the Second World War and was posted to India. He rose through the ranks to Staff Captain and spent three years blowing up bridges to hinder a threatened invasion from the East. As if to atone for this destruction, Whiston's first years of peace were spent, as Chief Architect of Scottish Special Housing, building homes for men returning to Scotland from the war. When it became apparent that council housing was taking a direction of which he disapproved - vertically into high-rise - Whiston resigned and went into private practice, turning his attention to ecclesiastical architecture.

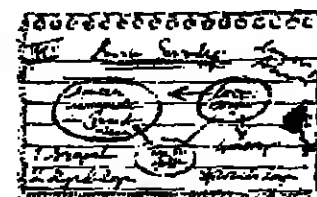
For his design of the Nunraw monastery and for his considerable role and influence in the construction of many church buildings, Whiston was appointed a Knight of St Gregory the Great in 1989. He was an enthusiastic academician of the Royal Scottish Academy, serving on many "hanging" committees. He combined his private practice with the role of Senior Lecturer at the Edinburgh College of Art and then Director of the first postgraduate course in Environmental Conservation. This he did until he retired in 1977.

Yet for all his success Whiston was unnecessarily self-critical. Had he made use of his talents? This did not however affect his close friendships, where his conversation was stimulating and wide ranging; but perhaps it was with his fine family that he found his greatest fulfilment and happiness. He and his wife

Kaye, who predeceased him in 1983, had five children. As Peter and his family had made the greatest use of their Scots education, so too did Peter's children. Like him they "got on" and that, in his later years, gave Peter Whiston much satisfaction and great pride.

CHARLES FRASER

Peter Rice Whiston, architect: born Leith, Midlothian 19 October 1912; partner, Dick Peddie McKay & Jamieson 1937-38; Chief Architect, Scottish Special Housing 1946-48; private ecclesiastical practice 1950-77; Senior Lecturer, School of Architecture, Edinburgh College of Art 1950-69; Director, Architectural Conservation Studies, Heriot-Watt University 1969-77; married 1947 Kathleen Parker (died 1983); one son, four daughters; died Edinburgh 24 January 1999.



RELIGIOUS NOTES

PETER MULLEN

Establishment is a pearl of great price

THE CHRISTMAS gospel announces the central truth of the faith: "And the Word was made flesh." This is, of course, a profound statement about the person and work of Christ but it is also a definition of Christianity. In England it is the resounding emphasis that the Christian faith is not a mere idea or theory, but that it is embodied in materiality and that it is institutional. In a word, it is Established.

Establishment, the close relationship between church and state, matters profoundly. This relationship effectively dates from the Restoration of the monarchy in 1660 and it was no mere "decorative aspect" of the constitution, as Walter Bagehot vainly believed. Eleven years earlier, Englishmen had perpetrated regicide and the country had just endured the rule of a puritanical dictatorship which euphemistically referred to itself as a Protectorate. The Anglican settlement of the 1660s, the glory of which was the 1662 Book of Common Prayer, was a solution to the problems caused by the rival claims of competing political sects; and through its implementation the nation escaped anarchy by the skin of its teeth.

The Establishment settlement, in Richard Hooker's words, declared "every man of England a member of the Church of England". This was no command to coerced conformity as membership

was defined by the twin obligations only to attend church three times a year and to keep the peace. Succeeding acts of emancipation for non-conformists and Roman Catholics in 1828 and 1829 broadened this generous and liberal arrangement and guaranteed a decent set of political liberties to an extent enjoyed by no other European nation.

Establishment destroyed the power of destructive sectarianism and created the one-nation democratic reality advocated by Burke and practised by Disraeli. Establishment remains the political pearl of great price as it is a wonderfully relaxed and easy-going system of toleration for, as it says, in the Prayer Book, "all sorts and conditions of men".

It has been chipped away at since 1970 when Parliament gave the Church, through the General Synod, the freedom to write its own liturgies and ceremonies. We have seen the results in the trivialised theology and the doggerel of the Alternative Service Book. The "freedom" granted to Synod has resulted in the secularisation and apostasy by ignorance and apathy of the whole nation: an achievement, not accomplished either by Cromwell's ironies or his thought police.

A disestablished Church would not give us more democracy, but less as we should no longer be governed by an institution of proven his-

torical competence but by the prescriptivist whims of politically correct sectarians. The overwhelming argument for Establishment is that we all inhabit the same plot. Our institutions are natural and national; they are what bind us to this realm, which is the predominant political reality. Establishment is rooted in a common language, a shared history and a national culture. It has stood us well for 300 years because it was soundly wrought. Why try to get rid of it then?

And so, to ask for Establishment is not a sentimental act; it is to want to preserve that thing which has given us the real liberties which we have as a nation. It is to want to preserve a way of life, a life of a certain character that has been won out of extreme difficulties. It is the desire to save that which we know does us good against both hidebound and doctrinaire views of the state, it is the insistence that intelligence yet counts for something above the noise made by the modernising vacillates.

It is the desire to be moderate and tolerant, truly liberal and practical - to conserve what works in daily life. It is the desire and the need to remain religious in the English mode.

The Rev Peter Mullen is co-editor of *Faith in the 21st Century* (Penguin, £7.99)

Joann Grillo

THE MEZZO-SOPRANO Joann Grillo was a singer designed by nature to sing the title role of Bizet's *Carmen*, and sing it she did, in opera houses and concert halls from Central City, Colorado to Bangkok, from Paris to Hong Kong. Her *Carmen* was proud and reserved, in the style of Merimée's original heroine, rather than the flamboyant gypsy of operatic tradition. She also sang *Carmen* at the Metropolitan, New York, where she clocked up 262 performances in 20 years.

Many of these performances were of supporting roles such as Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, Meg in *Falstaff*, Pauline in Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades*, but elsewhere in the United States and in Europe she sang the star roles: Marguerite in Berlioz's *La Damnation de Faust*, Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Santuzza in *Cavalleria rusticana*, Charlotte in Massenet's *Werther*, and Saint-Saëns's *Delilah*.

She also tackled the great Verdi mezzo roles - Amneris in *Aida*, Azucena in *Il Trovatore*, Princess Eboli in *Don Carlos*, Ulrica in *Un ballo in maschera*



Proud Carmen Opera Magazine

- but her voice was more suited to the French musical style of Berlioz, Massenet, Gounod and Bizet.

Born in 1936 in New York, Joann Grillo studied in that city and in West Germany. She made her debut in Brooklyn in 1958 and two years later was singing Amneris at the Central City Festival, Colorado.

Nineteen sixty-two was a seminal year in her career: she sang Azucena and Ulrica in Philadelphia; Adalgisa in *Norma* in Brooklyn; Emilia in *Otello* and the Monitor in Puccini's *Suor Angelica* at Dallas, as well as Siebel in Gounod's *Faust* at the San Carlo, Naples. She also made her New York City Opera debut that year in the role of Gertrude in Charpentier's *Louise*. The following year saw her Metropolitan Opera debut as Rosette, one of the "actresses" in Massenet's *Manon*.

For nearly two decades Grillo's career followed the same pattern: at the Met she sang a great number of lesser roles, including Suzuki in *Madama Butterfly*, one of her finest characterisations, Olga in *Eugene Onegin*, Pauline, Meg, Madalena in *Rigoletto* and Magdalene in *Die Meistersinger*, as well as the more substantial roles of Preziosilla in *La forza del destino* and, of course, *Carmen*.

During those years she sang Charlotte in Lisbon (1966) and Madrid (1967); Jocasta in Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex* in Frankfurt (1968); Maffio Orsini in Donizetti's *Lucrezia Borgia* in Philadel-

phia (1969); and Delilah in New Orleans and Tel Aviv (1962). She also appeared in Düsseldorf, Hamburg, Geneva, Zurich, Barcelona, Marseilles and Nice in a variety of roles.

Grillo sang *Carmen* at the Bregenz Festival in 1974, in Vienna in 1978 and in Paris in 1981. That year she and her husband, the tenor Richard Kness, founded the Ambassadors of Opera and Concert Worldwide, a company whose aim was to bring opera and musicals to places where such entertainment is not usually found. In July 1983, for instance, Ambassadors of Opera toured to Hong Kong, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur and Jakarta, with a repertoire of *Carmen* - in which both Grillo and Kness appeared - *Madama Butterfly*, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, and other out-of-the-way venues visited included Guam, Pakistan and Fiji.

ELIZABETH FORBES

Joann Grillo, opera singer: born New York 14 May 1936; married Richard Kness (one son); died New York 1 February 1999.

Quarrying conditions are 'development consent'

THE DETERMINATION of conditions to be imposed on an old mining permission pursuant to the Planning and Compensation Act 1991 was, the grant of "development consent" within the meaning of Council Directive (EEC) 85/337.

The House of Lords dismissed the council's appeal against the decision of the Court of Appeal that its determination of the conditions to be imposed on the operation of a quarry, in respect of which an old mining permission had been continued in force by section 71 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1947, should be quashed.

In 1995 the council, as mineral planning authority, determined conditions upon the operation of the quarry pursuant to section 22 of and Schedule 2 to the Planning and Compensation Act 1991.

The 1991 Act required the owner of land with the benefit of an old mining permission to apply to the local mineral planning authority for its registration, in default of which the permission would cease to have effect. Once the application had been granted, conditions for its operation had to be determined, after which the old permission would take effect as if it had been granted subject to those conditions.

The applicants, who were householders in a nearby village, applied for judicial review to quash the council's determination on the ground that, prior to imposing the conditions, it had not undertaken an environmental impact assessment in accordance with Council Directive (EEC)

TUESDAY LAW REPORT

16 FEBRUARY 1999

R v North Yorkshire County Council, ex p Brown and another

House of Lords (Lord Nicholls of Birkenhead, Lord Goff of Chieveley, Lord Jauncey of Tullichettle, Lord Lloyd of Berwick, Lord Hoffmann) 11 February 1999

337/1985, which required that such an assessment should be undertaken before the grant of "development consent" for specified kinds of project. The council contended that the imposition of conditions was not a "development consent". Richard Gordon QC and William Birles (Richard Burton, Cambridge) for the applicants; Timothy Stoker QC and Philip Kolvin (Rees & Perren) for the council.

Lord Hoffmann said that Article 12 of the Directive defined "development consent" as "the decision of the competent authority or authorities which entitles the developer to proceed with the project". Article 4 distinguished between certain types of major project, listed in Annex I, in respect of which an assessment was mandatory, and other kinds of project, listed in Annex II, in respect of which an assessment had to be undertaken

"where Member States consider that their characteristics so require".

Quarrying fell within Annex II, and the United Kingdom was thus required to establish criteria for determining whether a grant of "development consent" for quarrying should require an assessment. The Town and Country Planning (Assessment of Environmental Effects) Regulations 1988 were intended to establish such criteria, but applied only to a grant of planning permission.

In the case of an old mining permission, although the source of the developer's right to proceed was and remained the planning permission of 1947, even after conditions had been imposed under the 1991 Act, the developer nevertheless could not proceed to implement the permission unless the planning authority had determined the appropriate conditions. That was sufficient to bring the determination within the European concept of a "development consent".

The Directive did not apply to decisions which involved merely the detailed regulation of activities for which the principal consent, raising the substantial environmental issues, had already been given. The purpose of the procedure created by the 1991 Act, however, was to give the mineral planning authority a power to assess the likely environmental effects of old mining permissions which had been granted without, to modern ways of thinking, any serious consideration of the environment at all.

KATE O'HANLON Barrister

GAZETTE

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

BIRTHS

TIMMERMAN: On 5 January, to Marilyn (nee Watts) and Michael, a son Ralph Orlando Johannes, a brother for Miranda and Isabella.

IN MEMORIAM

BOSENCE: Susan. Remembered with love - Bo and family.

Announcements for BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorials services, Wedding anniversaries, In memoriam) are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra).

BIRTHDAYS

Miss Patti Andrews, singer (of the Andrews Sisters), 79; Mr Patrick Bailey, former director, Gatwick and Stansted Airports, 74; Mr Paul Bailey, novelist, 62; Professor Robin Clark, Sir William Ramsay Professor of Chemistry, University College London, 64; Mr Frederick Cuming, painter, 68; Sir Anthony Dowell, senior principal and director of the Royal Ballet, 56; Mr Peter Hain MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Welsh Office, 49; Mr Peter Hobday, radio presenter, 62; Mr Ian Lavender, actor, 53; Professor Jack Levy, engineer, 73; Mrs Anne Lonsdale, President, New Hall, Cambridge, 58; Mr John McEneaney, tennis player, 40; Mr Gerard Mansell, former Deputy

ANNIVERSARIES

Births: Giambattista Bodoni, printer and typographer, 1740; Sir Geraint Evans, operatic baritone, 1923. Deaths: Henry Deane, Archbishop of Canterbury, 1503; Pierre-Paul Prud'hon, painter, 1823. On this day: the Athenaeum Club, London, was founded, 1824; a fire broke out at Windsor Castle, causing limited damage,

LECTURES

National Portrait Gallery: Alfred Bradley and Susan Morris, "Lucy, Lady Duff Gordon: Letters from Egypt", 1.10pm. Wallace Collection, London W1: Robert Wenley, "Bronzes by Giambologna and his Followers", 1pm. RIBA Architecture Gallery, London W1: Deyan Sudjic, "The Real History of the House", 6.30pm.

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

The Duke of Edinburgh, Chancellor, attends a reception to celebrate Cambridge University's partnership with industry and business, at St James's Palace. The Princess Royal, Chancellor, London University, visits the Institute of Education, London WC1, and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London WC1; and presents the Royal Association of British Dairy Farmers' Princess Royal Award at Buckingham Palace. The Duke of Kent, Trustee, the National Museum of Science and Industry, attends a reception at Spencer House, London SW1. Princess Alexandra, President of Children's Country Holidays Fund, attends the presentation to the charity of the "Investors in People" Award at FOCUS Central London Training and Enterprise Council, Centre Point, London WC1.

CHANGING OF THE GUARD

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 11am. Nijmegen Company Grenadier Guards mounts the Queen's Guard, at Buckingham Palace, 11.30am, band provided by the Coldstream Guards.

WORDS

CHRISTOPHER HAWTREE biosolid, n.

I ONCE asked a bookseller whether he had any Buchan, to which he replied, "No - we're at the sewage end of the market!" The other, slighted customers looked askance.

He would come a cropper in America. Euphemism takes on a dimension that demands a new Swift. In the latest *Harper's*, Nancy Blat,

He counters that her for-profit body used to be called, more clearly, the Federation of Sewage and Industrial Wastes Associates; moreover, he quotes Nevada Water Planning's admirable distillation, the *Water Words Dictionary*: "the terms biosolids, sludge and sewage can be used interchangeably."

The inexorable rise of Lethal Lisa

The Brits Awards – an open invitation to pop's naughty little monkeys to misbehave. So what? According to executive producer Lisa Anderson there's more to life than kow-towing to music business bigwigs. And she should know. By David Lister

T might the Brit Awards, the annual celebration of British rock music, is bound to provoke a display of outrage by the young and publicity-hungry. Which means that its executive producer, 47-year-old Lisa Anderson, must be wondering whether she will be spending the following day in the Cabinet Office or down the nick.

Last year she ended up in Whitehall, leading a delegation to apologise to John Prescott after Danbert Nobacon of Chumbawamba doused the Deputy Prime Minister with the contents of an ice-bucket. Mr Prescott duly lectured Ms Anderson and various record company chiefs about the discourtesy to him and his "womenfolk".

The previous year, Anderson had been obliged to protect Jarvis Cocker physically, from both the police and (far more threatening) Michael Jackson's choreographer, who had fallen upon him menacingly after Cocker invaded the stage to wiggle his bottom in protest at Jacko's messianic set.

"I saw Jacko's people coming after him," she recalls, "and the choreographer didn't look at all friendly. So I said, 'Now come on Jarvis, you come to the dressing-room with me', and I managed to look after him."

But you can't win them all. When Fleetwood Mac last year insisted that their dressing-room area be painted beige, she gave in, recognising that the band was stuck in a Seventies time-war. But generally she wins.

No one in the music business will be surprised at that. Certainly not Geri Halliwell. As soon as she parted company from the Spice Girls she rang Anderson and asked her to be her manager. Geri knew Anderson to be the most influential woman in the music business, but hers is a name that few outside the industry would recognise, and her face is unknown to the general public.

Which is a pity, because the British music scene, not always big on glamour or humility, has probably never had a more human face, or a more down-to-earth role model. The only thing remotely scary about her is her laugh – a fruity chuckle, which increases in heartiness as it reaches its climax: a laugh that began in a Hertfordshire girls boarding school, was developed at the Pony Club and was perfected at a finishing school in Switzerland.

Anderson was brought in to remodel the Brits eight years ago. The event was a joke at the back end of the Eighties. It's possible now to feel nostalgia for Samantha Fox and Mick Fleetwood's performance when the autotune broke. "Here are The Four Tops," announced Sam, and she sang "My Girl". "Hello, I'm the One Top," she said.

Worse, as Anderson quickly discovered, it made only £10,000 in 1990 and there were constant accusations of vote-rigging by the record companies. It now brings in £300,000 a year to help fund the Brit School for



Three faces of Brit pop: clockwise from top, Lisa Anderson; John Prescott following the icy assault by Chumbawamba; Jarvis Cocker's moment of Brit-pop glory

young musicians, and other charities. She has democratised the voting structure, sees that the brochure is sold in 2,500 UK shops and has switched the television contract from the BBC, which didn't pay, to independent television companies, which do.

Finishing school had already made her a distinctive voice in record company land. "When I came into the industry 20 years or so ago, everyone still found it necessary to speak like David Bailey," she says. "But I just couldn't be bothered with all that. I talk posh. I'm middle class. That's the way I am. I'm not going to disguise it."

Nor has she been prepared to kowtow to the attitudes of an industry that even now, for all its business and exports prowess, can be adolescent in its attitudes to women – not least the sales conferences she had to attend, which were often preceded by the statutory soft porn videos. "They'd say to me 'where's your sense of humour?' I'd reply, 'evidently not in my cock.' The music industry tends to enjoy going

into a clan, into a posse. And women tend not to do posse. It was going on all around, lots of bonking on sofas and other extracurricular activities. But I never got involved in all that. When Richard Branson tried to throw me into the swimming-pool, I simply glared at him

'I'm not very good at corporate politics. I tend to say the wrong thing – like what's actually happening'

and said: NO, Richard! I've been to public school, I've done all that, been there. Don't."

Branson asked her to join Virgin, soon after she had left Chrysalis at the age of 23. There she had been assistant to the boss, Chris Wright (music-industry-speak for buying his presents and his furniture and

delivering his dry-cleaning). She arrived at Virgin just as punk was dawning, with its bile, spit and vomit. Vomiting is not her style, however, and she concedes that she has only ever thrown up twice, out of nerves. "Once was the day I became managing director of RCA Records. The other time was when I had to go to court to give a character reference for Johnny Rotten."

Punk may have died that day (Anderson says she testified to the effect that Rotten was too weedy to hurt anyone), but Anderson's career continued apace. As managing director of RCA, she was the first woman to achieve the top position in a record company in Britain. While there, she insisted, against much opposition, that the parent company BMG introduce a 12-week maternity leave and child allowance agreement for all female workers. She also introduced two weeks' paternity leave, but insisted that it be taken within a month of the birth, "not saved up for the rugby tour". Two years later she was sacked. "I'm not very good at corporate

'Sex? It's out of my system'

It's party time. Can I get you a drink Mr Humperdinck? By Cayte Williams

MOST PEOPLE remember college as a wild time, but not so the Nineties generation.

Alistair is throwing another of his famous club nights and has filled three floors of Manchester's Paradise Factory with students in Crimpeole mini-dresses and white knee-high boots or op-art shirts and stack heels. His Austin Powers night is a throw-back to the Sixties and the club looks like an LSD-laced love-in. But these are the neutered Nineties so sex, drugs and rock'n'roll ain't what they used to be.

As they feast themselves on their first tastes of freedom, sex is a long way down the menu. "Students don't sleep around much at college," says Tasha. "Everyone knows each other and word gets about." She mentions "randoms" – the odd shag with someone outside her own circle – but that's pretty rare. These are all second-year students, so perhaps they did it all in the first year. But Tasha wasn't really there, either. "I went to a mixed boarding school which is probably as debauched as you can get," she says with a wry smile. "I got it all out of my system." Tasha is 20.

Ian's a comp boy and prefers not to sleep with "college people", more because he finds the girls a bit immature than from any fear of social repercussions. "I'm seeing this girl who's really cool," he confesses, "I like her style and she's not too girly. I'm in two minds about having a relationship. The whole point of being at college is the freedom."

While most girls are flashing cleavages and smiles, Leona and Tasha are buttoned up in white coats (it's that Austin Powers lab-technician look). "I don't like wearing really obviously sexy clothes, I'm much more comfortable like this," she says. Leona, who still leads the student life even though she's left her course, kept up a steady relationship with a boy back home for the first year but admits to going wild last term. "I slept around a

THIS STUDENT LIFE

SPRING TERM, WEEK 6 AT THE MANCHESTER STUDENT HOUSE

bit but I've settled down more now," she explains, "although I can't stay with anyone for long." While she's busy chatting to an Engelbert Humperdinck look-alike at the bar, Alistair is busy flirting with a pretty blonde in the corner – but he's a public school boy and flirting just goes with the territory.

In fact, he's the only sober me out. Everyone else is tanked up on vodka and beer. When it comes to drugs, ecstasy, cocaine and speed aren't on the menu. It's alcohol they're after. "It's a real drinking scene here in Manchester," says Robbie. "Students only go for spiff and drink, partly because it's cheap and partly because there's not a dance scene any more in Manchester. People might take coke at flashier clubs but drugs are more associated with the street gangs and students don't go there. Anyway, coke is more a London thing."

So what about rock'n'roll? Alistair's laid on easy listening and funk on the ground floor, garage and house on the first and drum'n'bass on the second. All three floors are packed with writhing bodies. On the top floor, Tasha pulls faces at the DJ until he plays some decent drum'n'bass and then it's eyes down, foot-stomping and hip-wiggling all round.



CLASSIFIED

Legal Notices

LICENSING ACT 1964

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR JUSTICES LICENCE

We, John Alexander Ennis, having for the past six months carried on the trade of public house at the premises situate at 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 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HEALTH

The sound of deafness

What a disaster: your parents may have been right all along. Music at rock concerts and clubs, and from personal stereos could be causing irreversible damage to our hearing. By Liz Bestic

When Pete Bell, aged 51, went for a routine hearing test last month, he was shocked to discover that he had the hearing of a 78-year-old. "Like all people of my generation I used to listen to quite a lot of rock music," says Pete. "In the Seventies The Who came to our university and I remember sitting really close to the speakers so I could get the full effect of the sound. The music was really loud... For two days afterwards I had this numb feeling in my ears as if they had been hit, but it never occurred to me that my hearing might have been permanently damaged."

Jan Croker, the audiological scientist who tested Pete's hearing, was not at all surprised at the result.

"I see more and more baby boomers like Pete who listened to loud rock music in the Sixties and Seventies and who are now suffering from a substantial degree of hearing loss," she says.

Industrial workers have long been aware of the damage that loud noise can do to their hearing, and anyone exposed to more than 90 decibels throughout the day is obliged by law to wear ear protection. But according to recent research from Australia, young people who use personal stereos are regularly experiencing noise levels that exceed safety limits - just in the pursuit of pleasure.

The Australian study of 1,700 young people found hearing loss in people in their twenties and thirties. "Anything above 85 decibels increases your risk of hearing loss," says Jan Croker. "And if you're listening to a personal stereo in a noisy place, you may be turning up the volume without realising it."

"You begin to increase your risk of hearing loss when noise reaches levels of more than 85 decibels. To give you an idea of what that constitutes, the sound of a vacuum cleaner measures 80 decibels; a crying child produces 90 decibels or so, and a personal stereo hits about 100 decibels."

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People confirms that loud, continuous noise irreversibly damages the sensitive hair cells in the inner ear.

"We are all subjected to far more noise these days as part of everyday life, but it's digital technology that has made the real difference to the levels of noise that we can control," says Marie Mangan, of the RNID. "In the old days, when music was too loud it automatically distorted, acting as an automatic protection mechanism. Nowadays, digital technology means that we can turn the sound right up



Pete Townshend of The Who has said his hearing may have been impaired by the loud music he plays

Brendan Monks

with hardly any distortion at all." Jan Croker agrees. "Young people who go clubbing at night are particularly at risk of hearing loss," she points out. Music in night-clubs and raves can reach 120 decibels, and can go on for 15 hours. Exposure to these levels for two or three hours a week would give more than the "noise dose" considered unacceptable in industry. "Most people working in that level of noise would be obliged by their employers to wear ear protection."

Although Pete has hardly noticed that he has trouble with his hearing, he does admit that he can miss the ends of words and has some difficulty picking up high-pitched sounds. "I suppose, if I am honest about it, I do have trouble hearing conversations, particularly if I am in a bar, for example, where there is a lot of background noise," he says.

"Pete is a classic case of someone who is constantly compensating for his hearing loss," says Jan Croker. "Ears

are delicate and complex structures, which are easy to damage. Hearing loss can creep up on people. The ringing noises in his ears after that rock concert all those years ago went away, but we now know that this type of loud noise causes subtle levels of damage to the infrastructure of the inner ear, and the effects are cumulative."

We may all be storing up trouble for the future, according to the RNID. They are concerned about the growing trend for film-makers and studios to produce films with unnecessary and exceedingly high sound levels.

"Recent examples are Armageddon, which reached 115 decibels, Lethal Weapon, which reached 108 decibels, and Godzilla, at 109 decibels. These are all way above the comfortable limit at which we should be listening to sound," says Marie Mangan.

So is there anything we can do to protect our hearing? "Earplugs are the latest fashion accessory on the dance floor," says Jan Croker. "Many DJs are

now wearing them. I recently tested the hearing of a DJ who had significant hearing loss. He now never goes into a club without earplugs. They knock off just enough noise to make the difference between damaging your hearing, or not."

And what about people such as Pete, in whom the damage may already be done?

"Ironically, the very technology that has made loud noise so prevalent can help the problems it creates," says Jan Croker. "Nowadays you can get minute digital hearing aids that are invisible because they sit right inside the ear." On a recent television programme, Peter Stringfellow demonstrated a hearing aid of this type.

However, hearing aids still have a certain stigma attached to them - and they can be pricey. The really tiny ones can cost £500 to £2,000. But now the RNID is calling for a national screening campaign for everyone aged 50 and over, and for the new digital hearing

aids to be made available on the NHS.

Jan Croker says: "If people are screened sooner, and fitted with hearing aids earlier, they fare better as they get older, when age-related hearing loss kicks in."

She predicts a rise in the numbers of young people with hearing loss who will be coming to her clinic in the future. "If Pete has the hearing of a 78-year-old as a result of rock music in the Sixties, it's hard to imagine what on earth is happening to the ears of the youth today."

Meanwhile, Pete is going back in a year's time to have his hearing tested again. "Now I am aware of the problem, I want to be able to do something if my hearing gets any worse. I'm not too keen on having a hearing aid, but if it were necessary I guess I would go along with it," he says.

For free information about noise exposure and hearing loss, call the RNID helpline on 0870 6050123

I've lost all my sex drive

I AM delighted for all those relationships that have been helped by the arrival of Viagra. What, however, is being done for women? I am 47, and over the past five years I have gone off sex. This is having a lousy effect on a relationship which otherwise has a lot going for it. A brief course of counselling led nowhere. I have told my partner that screaming at me is no answer. I've heard that at my age this is not unusual and I could just try putting up with it. I can do that, but my partner can't. I think the cause may be hormonal. Where do I go for help and what should I ask? You and your partner need to begin talking (not screaming) about how to solve this problem. Fatigue or depression may be factors. You should be asking yourselves how much time you devote to your relationship. Is it enough? You should be able to find out whether there is a hormonal problem by asking your GP to refer you to an endocrinologist, who is interested in hormonal problems around the time of the menopause. Some drugs, particularly the newer anti-depressants, can suppress sexual desire and pleasure. I would suggest that you and your partner see a specialist therapist who is accredited by the British Association for Sexual and Marital Therapy. You can contact them at PO Box 13666, London SW20 9ZB; or visit their website at <http://www.basmt.org.uk>

A QUESTION OF HEALTH



DR FRED KAVALIER

septum that separates the nostrils. Try an anti-inflammatory nasal spray such as Becosone for a month or two. Have plenty to drink throughout the day. This will prevent you from becoming dehydrated overnight. If you are taking any regular medications, look at the side-effects. Many drugs cause dryness of the mouth. Make sure the air in your bedroom is well-humidified. Containers of water on the radiators will help.

I HAVE noticed that if I sleep in a certain position (with lots of pillows, on my side, with arms curled in front of me), as I am drifting off to sleep I can feel my breathing get shallower and shallower until I wake suddenly, gasping. Is this sleep apnoea, and should I worry? Sleep apnoea causes many episodes through the night in which breathing becomes shallow and then stops for 10 seconds or more. Most people with sleep apnoea snore. Ask your partner to watch you when you are asleep. If the same thing occurs while you are sleeping, it may be sleep apnoea, which can have serious effects if untreated. The way to find out is to be referred to a sleep laboratory.

Send questions to A Question of Health, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 5DL; fax 0171-293 2188; e-mail health@independent.co.uk. Dr Kavalier cannot respond personally to questions

Stoicism might save the NHS

ONE OF the puzzles of medicine is why some patients feel ill while others, with the same symptoms, do not. Perhaps you think this is not a puzzle at all, but simply a matter of tolerance. Tolerance and stoicism are, indeed, qualities whose supply has diminished as pressures on the NHS have risen.

A newspaper I once worked for - the late lamented Sunday Correspondent - used to run a regular feature in which celebrities were asked to name which, in their opinion, was the most overrated virtue. Julie Burchill, I remember, chose tolerance, in keeping with the Thatcherite tenor of the times (this was 1990).

I thought of this last week after talking to a couple of GPs who were bemoaning the increasing demands on them from the worried well - people who fear that they may be ill, who are often unhappy and have myriad social problems, but for whom medicine has little to offer.

Doctors are paid to be tolerant, but these GPs felt they had reached their limit. They maintained that their capacity to help those who could benefit from treatment was being jeopardised by overwhelming demands from those who could not. Most doctors, if asked today which is the most overrated virtue, would, I suspect, agree with Ms Burchill. One of those I talked to

HEALTH CHECK



JEREMY LAURANCE

suggested that charging a fee for each consultation was the only way to sort the truly needy from the merely noisy. But charging, as he readily acknowledged, would be an exceedingly blunt instrument for the task. What is needed is some internalised restraint, a revived fashion for stiff upper lips, a campaign to make coping cool and stoicism sexy. Stoicism, not monetarism, is the way to save the NHS.

An editorial in the current issue of The Lancet throws some interesting light on the mechanisms that cause some people to feel ill while others, with the same set of symptoms, do not. Researchers have established that people who suffer dizziness are also more likely to experience anxiety and depression. However, efforts to establish the nature of the link, in terms of either a psychological or a biological mechanism, have failed because no explanation can account for the fact that



Stoic philosopher Epictetus would never have risen from slavery without a positive outlook Mary Evans

there are some people who do not report symptoms, but have similar clinical signs to those who do.

The authors suggest that what we have here is an example of "self-focusing" - something that is also seen in chronic fatigue syndrome, irritable bowel syndrome, and patients who complain of chronic pain. Self-focusing is seen in individuals with a slightly gloomy or nervous aspect, who are inclined to look out for new sensations and to

interpret them more negatively than those with a more positive outlook. "If a sensation such as dizziness is thought to be a sign of illness, it is more likely to be reported than if it were thought to be a normal response to a stressful situation," they write.

The importance of this is that the treatment of patients with chronic complaints needs to focus on both the physical and the psychological aspects. The standard GP rebuttal when

confronted by a patient with a new ailment - "What do you expect at your age?" - needs to be resisted, but encouragement to see symptoms as normal rather than abnormal can transform a person's outlook and hence their health.

Stoics are made, not born. The capacity to tolerate discomfort and suffering is heavily dependent on parental attitudes. Parents who are supportive rather than dismissive of a child who injures itself help to develop coping mechanisms. A parent who takes time off work and complains constantly sets a different example from one who rarely complains.

Stoicism can help you to keep a job and get through life. But it needs to be tempered by medical reality. Arthritis is an area in which the traditional stoic patient is treated later than he or she should have been. So is cancer. Complaining can be good for you.

Most minor ailments, however, will get better of their own accord, or if they don't get better they will diminish in importance. All treatments carry side-effects that may be worse than the disease itself. Doctors should be avoided wherever possible, and regarded as a court of last resort where not. It is always worth considering whether the best option, for patient and NHS, may be to let nature take its course.



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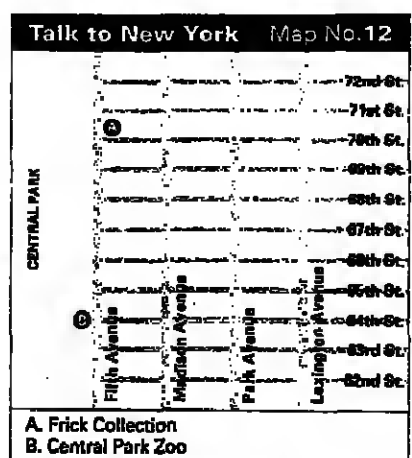
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THE INDEPENDENT

It only hurts when I look

More and more Americans are staying awake during operations. Would you go under the knife with just a local anaesthetic? By Roger Dobson

The patient lying on the operating theatre table is chatting about her holiday in the wilderness of Montana to just about anyone who will listen. As she tells how she and the kids went horse riding, sang around campfires and ate barbecued ribs, she seems unaware that her left leg is lying at an alarmingly acute and unnatural angle to the rest of her body. She also appears oblivious to the sounds of one of the surgeons chipping away at her thigh.

While she recounts her summer adventures, she is also undergoing a hip-replacement operation in a New York hospital and the surgery is being carried out under a local anaesthetic so she can be awake.

In American hospitals almost half of all operations are now carried out under local and regional anaesthetics like this, and in Scandinavia the figures are even higher, with eight out of 10 patients operated on using local anaesthesia.

But in Britain, it's estimated that less than 20 per cent of patients have a local anaesthetic, despite claims that those who are given them recover faster, are healthier, suffer less post-operative pain, and get back to work more quickly.

With a general anaesthetic, the patient is given a fast-acting drug, usually on the back of the hand, and is then maintained in a state of unconsciousness for the duration of the operation. Muscle relaxants may also be used to allow the surgeon to get at areas protected by strong muscles. When these relaxants are used, patients have to breathe with the help of a ventilator via a tube down the throat.

Local anaesthetics can be administered in the area where the surgery is to take place, or close to the large nerves that service the

area to be operated on, like an injection around the collarbone to numb the hand.

Two other types of local or regional anaesthetic are spinal blocks and epidurals, which involve injections into different sections of the spinal cord. In both cases, once the drugs have been injected the area will become numb and feel paralysed, but the patient will remain awake and alert.

According to Dr Terry Dodge, a director of the American Association of Anaesthesiology, and an anaesthetist in South Carolina, this staying awake is one of the reasons

'We remove colons and gall bladders under regional anaesthetics and most of the patients are talking to me while it's happening'

why regional and local anaesthetics are so popular.

"Our population is very informed. They like to have as little done to them as they can, they like to know what is happening, and a lot of them like to be awake and alert. With regionals they have a shorter recovery time so they can get back to work and functioning, they feel like eating more quickly, their colour is a lot better, and they need less anti-pain medication."

"I'd say that in America 40 per cent have regionals and 60 per cent have locals. That's a lot higher than the UK, and when I talk to British anaesthetists they are very sur-

prised that we do so many spinal and local anaesthetics."

A wide range of surgery is now carried out with regional anaesthetics at American hospitals, and only operations involving the head and chest are routinely performed with a general anaesthetic.

"Other than that, it's mostly regionals or locals. We do very few things on legs and arms with patients asleep. We do knee and hip replacements here under regional anaesthetics or epidurals. We remove colons and gall bladders in the same way and most of the patients are talking to me while it's happening. If patients are nervous they can be sedated, which makes the time go more quickly, but they can still scratch their nose if it itches."

Just why there is such a big difference in practice between anaesthetists in Britain and those in America and a number of other countries is not clear. Some surgeons, particularly those who are young or inexperienced, are known not to like having patients watching what is happening, and some believe a general anaesthetic is less stressful for the patient. Anaesthetists say it's down to demand and that patients in Britain expect to be unconscious during their operation.

"One of the reasons for the different patient expectation. There is something in the British psyche that says you must go to sleep during an operation and know nothing about it. Indeed, some people would find it stressful being awake. If you ask the average patient what state they would like to be in for a hip replacement, 100 per cent would say asleep," says Dr David Wilkinson, a consultant anaesthetist at St Bart's in London and the treasurer of the Association of Anaesthetists of Britain and Ireland.

Patients should be given a choice



'I've been so relaxed in pain.'

where possible, but if the anaesthetist is not skilled in the regular use of regional or local anaesthetics, it is an unrealistic option.

Dr Wilkinson says that patients' choices can also be influenced by what the anaesthetist tells them.

"You can influence the patient quite dramatically because there are two ways of putting things. I can say, 'You are going to have this operation on your knee, and I can either inject you with this big needle which I will push into your back and put in

these drugs which will numb you from the waist down, or you can have a tiny little scratch on your hand which will put you to sleep.'

"But I could offer the same choice and say, 'I'm going to make a tiny little scratch on your back and it will make you numb but you'll still be awake, or I can give you a general anaesthetic, push this great big tube down your throat and put you on a breathing machine for several hours. It's your choice.'"

He says 80 to 90 per cent of op-

erations in the UK are carried out with general anaesthetics, and that there is no proof that regionals are better or safer. "Your discharge time is faster but long-term recovery probably doesn't change. You may be able to go home two days after having a bowel removed, but your body still has to recover at home," he says.

Although local anaesthetics are gaining in popularity, they are not new. The first nerve blocker was used in the spring of 1885 at the

Johns Hopkins Hospital in Baltimore when cocaine was injected to anaesthetise a patient who was being treated for masturbation, then considered a grave medical problem.

It apparently did not work out for that particular problem but, within a short time, it was being used for almost every major operation. Survival rates increased dramatically as patients recovered very quickly, and the only casualties were members of the surgical team who became life long cocaine addicts.

TEL: 0171 293 2222

HEALTH

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Frankenfoods or Fairy Tales?

When we were young we believed tales of the big bad wolf and giant beanstalks. Nowadays we see reports of the potentially terrible consequences of so called " Frankenfoods" - in both cases these stories may have more to do with fantasy than fact.

As the debate develops, the need for clear, balanced information which people can understand becomes ever more important. Pseudo-science and overblown reporting have contributed to confusion and argument based on views rather than facts.

As the Prime Minister said: "We must proceed on the best scientific evidence... not simply on the basis of prejudice... the worst way to proceed would be to raise fears in the public mind before the evidence is put before the people."



Foodfuture, the UK food and drink manufacturing industry consumer information programme about genetic modification, sets out to provide just that - clear information on both the potential benefits, as well as the concerns about genetically modified foods.

Foodfuture promotes debate from all interested parties and the recent foodfuture Question Time debates, held around the UK brought together organic growers, Friends of the Earth, scientists and consumer groups as well as farmers, food industry and seed producers.

For those who want to understand more and make up their own minds, contact foodfuture for free information.

Foodfuture's website is <http://www.foodfuture.org.uk>

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At long last, a group show with a decent theme! 'Thinking Aloud' celebrates creativity as making-do and mending. By Tom Lubbock

Make it up as you go along

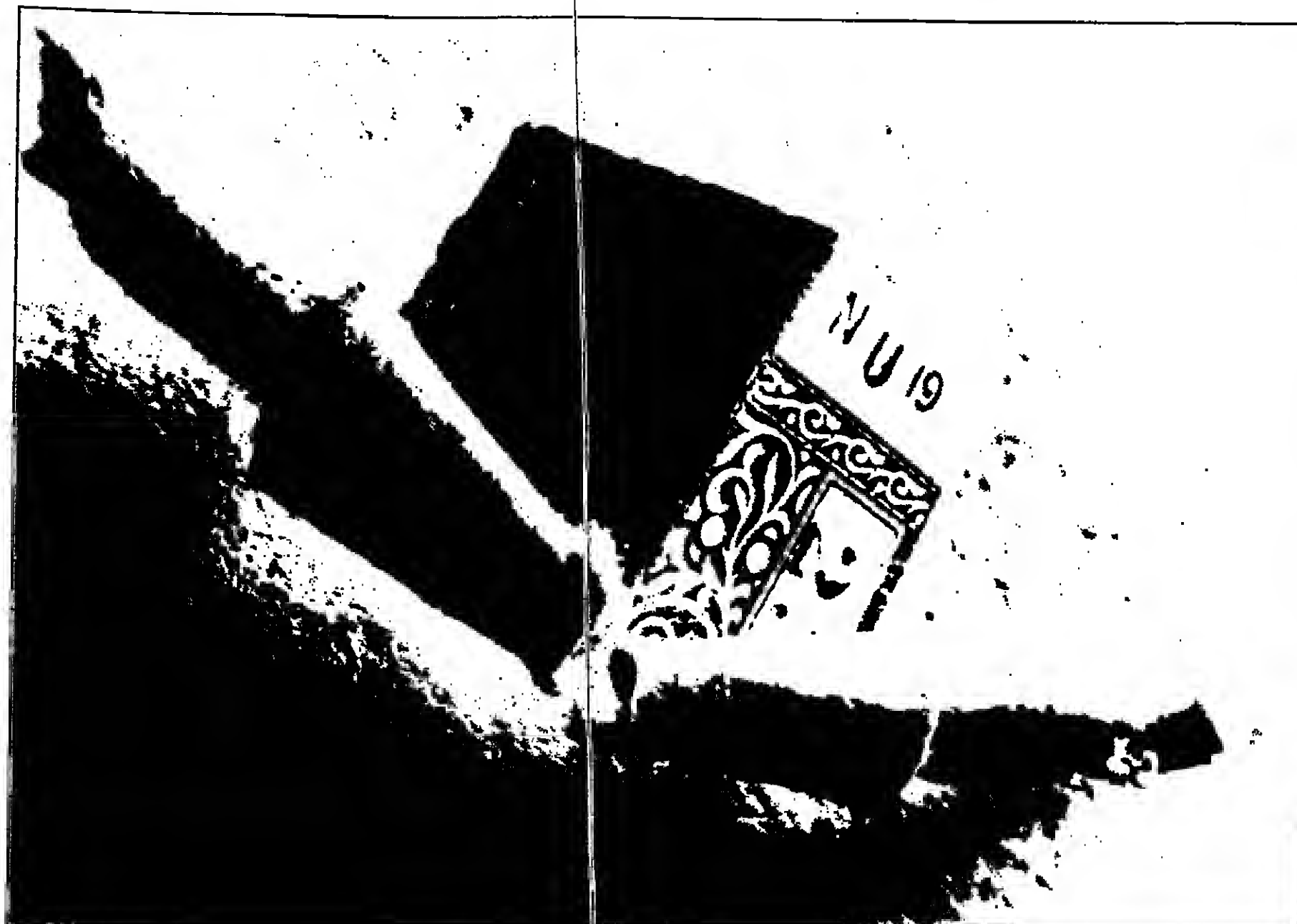
Rude words first. The themed group show - cui bono, for God's sake? Anybody who frequents the contemporary art world will be aware that there's a large class of curators keeping it going, and that one of their main jobs is to think up half-cocked concepts around which to organise group exhibitions. So you get shows called things like *Down the Plughole: New Art from the Bathroom*, which will feature 20-odd works that are said to "explore notions of hygiene, waste and personal privacy" - an invented example, but they're easy to invent - and almost every group show has to have something like it.

Now group exhibitions are important. They're one of the main ways that new and not very well-known work gets its first public outing. A theme-based selection process is exactly what you don't want. For what happens? Your curator will start off with two or three decent works in mind which roughly fit the bill - indeed, which may have suggested the bill in the first place. But then they have to fill out the show with art which either doesn't really fit, or does fit but isn't much good.

So the theme procedure both imposes a probably irrelevant interpretative package as the very condition of display, and actually ensures that bad art will be favoured over good. The only people who clearly benefit are the curators themselves, pleased with this chance to exercise what they may believe to be their creativity; and another lot of people, usually described as "lecturers", who get to write the catalogue essays that expound the wretched themes (a species of crank literature if ever there was one).

And who needs themes at all? Does the public demand them? Why not cut all this crap, and have the selectors simply make it their business to round up and present more or less miscellaneous, any new work they can candidly admire? Not *Down the Plughole* - but *Twenty More Excellent Artworks*. Or are these themes a handy cover for curators who can explore notions fill the cows come home, but can't tell better work from worse? Eh?

I'm thinking about curating, having just been to *Thinking Aloud* - a South Bank Touring Exhibition, currently occupying all three galleries of The Cornerhouse in Manchester. It is itself a kind of themed group show, but with differences. It's been got together, not by a professional curator, but by the sculptor Richard Wentworth. The exhibits aren't by



'Rolled bus ticket' (above), Sculpture involuntaire, photographed by Brassaï, and an anonymous wooden artefact, 'Dynamite' (top right)

any means all works of art. And it's not obvious, either, what the theme governing this miscellany of objects is. In fact, trying to work out its linking principles is the show's chief and irresistible pleasure.

What would you say? Here are some of the things. Prosthetic hands. Architects' rough sketches - for the Crystal Palace and the Cenotaph. A doodle in red crayon made by Lloyd George at the Versailles Peace Conference. A Brassaï close-up photo of a bus ticket someone has folded, half-torn and scrunched (entitled *Sculpture involuntaire*). A Walker Evans photo of a small, poor town shop-window display. A 1989 Romanian flag with a torn hole where the Communist emblem used to be. A bird's nest

with a right-angle (because it was built where two walls meet). A mould for a rubber tyre.

And here are some more. A piece of hastily fabricated Di memoriam tal. The Blue Peter-style prototype for the Dyson vacuum cleaner. Wooden imitation sticks of dynamite. An arched-physiognomic reconstruction of King Cyrus's head from his skull. Sundry maps, including Harry Beck's first draft for the London Underground diagram. Sundry toys, including a miniature model of an exploding shell-burst (came with a lead soldier set), and a game of Scrabble.

Enough to be going on with, but it's in the nature of the case that I'm not sure if this is a representative sample. Representative of what? Rather than a single concept, there

seem to be a number of overlapping ones, such as: first thoughts and sketches, scale-models, temporary solutions, things jotted on the spur of the moment, alterations and adaptations and reworkings of existing stuff, imitations and reconstructions, substitutes, play versions and practice versions, everyday art. Connections jump and criss-cross all over the place. Most pieces exemplify several themes at once. Each of them is a tribute to the eye (Wentworth's) that made these rare finds - or again to the human culture that produced these rare gifts.

Take Stadhuis in Ahruch: a German constructional toy from which you can build a scale model of a house in the process of being demolished. Or take the ex-

hibit whose caption goes: "Map plotted by a Dutch prisoner of war in a Japanese camp, WWII, showing the progress of troop advances on the Russian front, as interpreted from scraps of BBC radio broadcasts." What a trove! And what a world! The show's hero is not man the maker, but man the maker-do and mender. The god of *ad hoc* and DIY presides. Picking up clues and making mental links, we viewers feel we, too, are actively involved in the process.

So this is one of the most intelligent and lively bits of curating you're likely to find and, among exhibitions where the curators are, in fact, it's so cheering and seductive that it's worth noting - for

balance - the potential sentimentality of all this low-tech Crusocism. It is, after all, a good thing that there are also some *finished products in full working order* in the world. Human improvisation is a wonder, but it's not always so wonderful.

For instance, I remember Wentworth once citing, as an example of everyday sculpture, people's tendency to set an empty drink can on top of a bollard, as if on a pedestal. You may think this observation pretentious. I think it's very true and acute - but too high-minded. Evidently the drinker can't be bothered to find a bin, but doesn't like to drop the can, and what's going on is disguised littering. It's disguised from passing witness, maybe even from the litterer himself - and dis-

guised as, precisely, a neat, quasi-sculptural bit of balancing. But it'll fall off eventually, and someone else will have to clear it up. The moral isn't just creativity; it's creativity used as a blind.

That's mild enough. But *Thinking Aloud* might equally celebrate some undoubtedly malignant cases of improvisation. The dudum bullet, for instance, or the nail bomb. There's lots of war stuff in the show, but no weapons; if you're going to praise human ingenuity, you must allow that much of it has been devoted to ripping humans apart. Or again, think about the defence of property: Those shards of broken glass cemented along the tops of walls - what could better fit Wentworth's bill? It's constructive-adaptive re-use of waste to a tee. But it's too bloody nasty.

I haven't mentioned any of the bona fide artworks yet. There are plenty, mostly of the transformed found object sort. They seemed slightly irrelevant. Granted, in any general survey of human creativity, the special creativity of artists is likely to be demoted, but the result isn't quite - as you might think - that intermingled here you can't tell the difference between art and curio. You can usually, but the difference is mainly that the art-object's interestingness looks like a laboured, self-conscious version of the non-art object's.

This isn't a point against art, though. Rather, art's been too successful for its own good. We've been taught by generations of post-Dada work to extract all sorts of interest from everyday things, so that we've got so good at it we can do it by ourselves and don't need artworks to help anymore. This is a situation that some of the old art-art pioneers positively looked forward to. But now it seems to be actually happening. Barriers break down. Some people are going to be out of a job. The show is drawing good crowds, and they don't seem to care what's what.

Thinking Aloud - at The Cornerhouse, Oxford Street, Manchester until 28 February; closed Mondays; admission free. Then showing at Camden Arts Centre, 9 April to 30 May. A National Touring Exhibition from the Hayward Gallery

Damon Runyon's Dubliners

YOUNG, GIFTED and Irish: the number of dramatists who answer to that description continues to swell. The latest is Mark O'Rowe, whose elatingly funny play, *Howie the Rookie*, is premiering now in Mike Bradwell's focused production at The Bush. In a tradition stemming from Brian Friel's 1979 masterpiece *Fuath Healer*, down to Conor McPherson's 1995 'prentice piece *This Lime Tree Bower*, *Howie the Rookie* consists of consecutive monologues that view fateful events from discrepant perspectives. So every man is the hero of his own monologue? One of the twists here is that that truism is ultimately belied. At the end of the two

brilliantly delivered solo turns - which take you on a pungent bawl of lowlife Dublin with its feuds of honour, involving scabies-infested mattresses and accidentally trodden-on prize Siamese fighting-fish - the first speaker becomes, soberingly, the unexpected tragic hero of the second character's monologue.

It's the complete rhythmic assurance and matter-of-fact command of crudely detail that impress in the writing. Whether denying homosexuality ("Game meaning gay, neither of which I am, furthest thing from..."), or clearing up any possible ambiguity on words such as "after" ("Probably thinks I'm after her - the

romantic sense, like, oot the other... the batterin'"), O'Rowe's Dubliners kept reminding me, in an odd way, of Damon Runyon's New Yorkers. There's the same absurd courtliness in their argot and nicknames, the same weird pedantry on points of honour. It contributes to a feeling that the genre we are in is urban pastoral and the figures populating it are hapless innocents. All of which enables O'Rowe to pull the rug from under

THEATRE
HOWIE THE ROOKIE
BUSH THEATRE
LONDON

us in the erotic final sequence. Aidan Kelly as the Howie Lee and Karl Shiels as the Rookie Lee serve the piece supremely well - the tough, crop-headed Kelly given to woefully doleful, embarrassed grins when he thinks he has pulled a bird, however drunk, the pin-up Shiels is a daft mix of cocky bandsomeer and moral cowardice. Both in the acting and the writing, the timing is spot on. Comic details, such as the fact that the Howie's father, having saved up to buy a car because of his bad tickle, blows all the money on a Handicam, glancingly recur at the most inappropriate moments - as when, accepting condolences after the

dreadful débacle, the father tells the Rookie that he's "very photogenic". Are consecutive monologues drama? I can't see how you can claim they aren't when the energy between stage and audience is as strong as it is here. Indeed, the 1991 Royal Court revival of Friel's *Fuath Healer* is the most shattering experience I've ever had in the theatre. Both Friel and Conor McPherson are, however, also masters of dialogue and ensemble. I await, with keen anticipation, evidence that this is true, too, of O'Rowe.

PAUL TAYLOR

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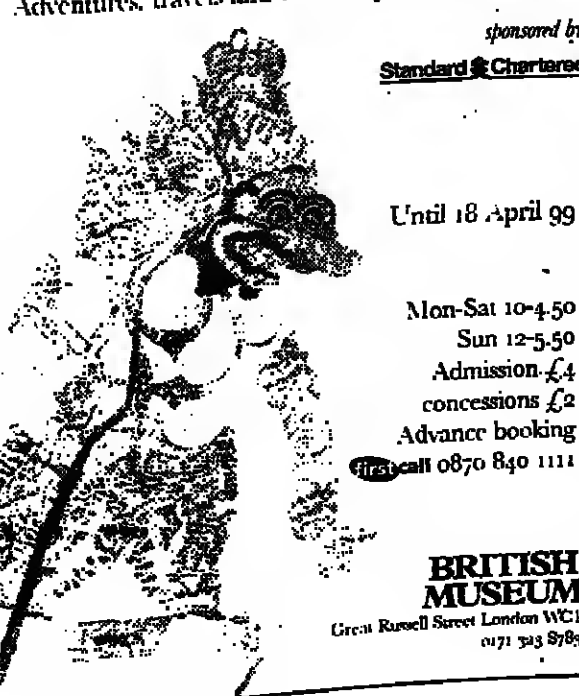


Karl Shiels as Rookie Lee

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A very British decade

THE ROEHAMPTON Institute - near Barnes, in south-west London - has just presented a series of concerts entitled "British Music of the 1990s": four programmes, quite ambitious for an academic organisation of its kind, which culminated on Saturday with a recital by the Arditti String Quartet. This concert was, in addition, preceded by a one-day conference on the same theme.

Though somewhat dominated by speakers from the universities of Sussex and Surrey, the conference was a useful mixture of musical analysis and cultural commentary; it was surprising, however, that no one outside what many would regard as the narrow confines of modernism had been invited to suggest a wider perspective, and to stir up rather more dissent. The lengthy day was most valuable for the forthright and perceptive observations of Arnold

CLASSICAL
BRITISH MUSIC OF
THE 1990S
ROEHAMPTON INSTITUTE
LONDON

Whittall. And Roehampton's Chapman Conference Hall, opened just 18 months ago, proved a surprisingly conducive space for both concert and music-making. Wednesday's opening concert, given by Gemini, did more than the Arditti Quartet's programme to suggest the full range of composing going on in Britain today; this group and its director, the clarinettist Ian Mitchell, have always been noted for their openness to nonconformist elements. But while it was good to hear pieces by no fewer than eight very different composers (five of whom were present), a shorter, better rehearsed programme might have offered better value.

particularly enjoyed two works for the full quartet of clarinet doubling bass clarinet, violin, cello and piano; the raw energy and continually questing spirit of Andrew Poppy's *Ghost*, receiving its premiere, and the power as well as technical sophistication of the underrated Geoffrey Poole's *Septembral*. The Arditti - as the quartet is affectionately known - celebrate their 25th anniversary this year. Irvine Arditti and the changing collection of players he has grouped around him over that quarter-century have, as Jonathan Harvey said in his talk on Saturday afternoon, done much to keep the quartet medium alive, well and kicking in the late-20th century, and I hope we hear more of their scrupulously prepared and ever-vital performances in concert this year than has recently been the case in this country. Already established places by Thomas Adès, Harrison

Birtwistle and Harvey himself - the latter's super-refined Third Quartet of 1995 - were preceded by the most recent of the three to have been written for the group by James Dillon; here all the composers except Birtwistle were present. Completed last year, Dillon's 15-minute, four-movement work offers not merely string textures which brilliantly and imaginatively continue to expand our notions of the quartet medium itself, but also a fresh purchase on the modal and other allusive elements that have characterised his Nineties style. These are integrated with remarkable subtlety into what is often a still aggressive, challenging discourse, producing what must surely be not only one of this composer's best works, but also one of the finest British compositions of the decade which this concert helped to celebrate.

KEITH POTTER

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NATIONAL GALLERY

MEDIA

Sales of women's magazines are falling. Why? Because women are changing, and publishers can't keep up. By Sally O'Sullivan

Change is good for your figures

What's happening to women's magazines? Or more importantly perhaps, what's happening to women? They used to be reliable purchasers of their favourite titles, deviating only momentarily to embrace a new arrival which would fit seamlessly into their ever-expanding portfolio of must-have glossy buys.

Not any more. Choice has never been better, women have never been more media-literate – and women's magazines have never felt such a chill wind of neglect. The publishers, naturally, have well-rehearsed answers. "Yes, our circulation figures are slightly down, but given the number of launches in our sector we have, in fact, increased our market share," – and pigs have flown.

Women are temporarily being distracted at news-stands by scratch cards, the lottery, a plethora of newspaper magazines, but the market is stabilising – pigs remain airborne. "Some younger women have been tempted by the success of the men's magazines, but the market is returning to normal," Pigs in space.

In truth, "the market" is neither stabilising or returning to normal. It has changed. Why? Because women have changed, and those publishers who have noticed this – and there aren't many – haven't changed their magazines fast enough. Hence most women's titles, from *Good Housekeeping* to *Elle* are losing circulation; stalwarts like *Cosmopolitan* and *Vogue* are just managing to hang on; *Options*, the big success of the 1980s, has closed and *Red*, *Emap's* £5m – or £7m, depending on who you're talking to – launch has taken a nasty tumble.

There is a golden route to magazine success: focus on your reader and fulfil her needs. Those needs will swing in different degrees from information to aspiration to sensation but must, without fail, reach expectation and beyond. Currently, many women are expecting more from their magazines than is being delivered, and there's nothing guaranteed to lose readers faster than dashed expectations.

In recent years it has become far more difficult to categorise women by age and type. A simple example: it used to be fair to assume that younger women would be interested in fashion and beauty topics and older women in home and leisure. Now, younger women are as interested in their homes as their mothers, just as their mothers are into fashion and style. Clothes and kitchens are now interchangeable between generations; aspirations remain diverse but not predictable, and the thirst for information grows



Choice in the women's magazine sector has never been broader – but do today's women still want to read what's on offer?

across the board. Humour is less decade-dependent, music is timeless (Blondie at the top of the charts, for God's sake) and that well-loved *Cosmo* staple, "how to be good in bed" seems to appeal more to the fearsome 50s than their children.

This lifestyle evolution makes a nonsense of publishers' traditional market segmentation (they like to divide women's magazines into "fashion and beauty", "home" and "general interest"). "Fashion", to the reader, is a universal term meaning "now" style in clothes/home/thinking. "Beauty" is an oddly outmoded word which has almost no relevance to "self", and self is where beauty is at these days – be yourself, care for your well-being, follow your spirit. The "step-by-step to a perfect face" feature, so loved by the "fashion and beauty" magazines, have about as much relevance as "step-by-step to a perfect government". "Home" also relates to self, but in a

more hostile way. It doesn't just mean sofas and sinks, it means the way you live and feel which, in turn means spirit, style and well-being. I labour the point suffice it to say the women's lifestyles as they lead them, or, importantly, as they aspire to lead them, are not being genuinely reflected in their magazines. And

Women's lifestyles as they lead them – or, more importantly, aspire to lead them – are not being genuinely reflected in their magazines

readers are quick to pick up a sham. What's the answer? Many people claim modern men's magazines have hit it, with the enormous success of titles like *FHM* and *Loaded*. But, in truth, this is simply an immature market in the throes of maturing. When *Caval* launched the younger men's title, *Front*, in Octo-

ber there were words of warning about the "difficulties" of the market place. In truth, the only "difficulty" was that the market was wrapped in the mass domination of the only two big players. It was rather like saying that if *Marie Claire* and *Good Housekeeping* were the only two women's magazines in exis-

and painful evolution in the women's marketplace. More magazines focussing on smaller but more acute lifestyle niches, less predictability and more honesty.

One example is *Good Health*, which my company will be publishing from the April issue. It will be a lifestyle magazine taking health as

personal well-being and happiness. Needless to say, there is a knack in finding just the right lifestyle niche to sustain a vibrant title. Take gardening, for instance, a huge, undervalued marketplace on every level, fuelled by rapidly growing consumer interest. Hence, garden centres are booming – a sure way to spot a trend with legs is to watch where money is being spent – and so are all media support systems, including television programmes and magazines. At the last count there were some 12 gardening magazines blooming nicely on news-stands, with several more in the pipeline.

You could be mistaken for believing that cooking might support a similarly successful magazine niche. After all, there is massive consumer interest, supported by literally thousands of gorgeously seductive books and television programmes presented by the new, pony-tailed, superstar chefs. But

cooking magazines don't flourish. *Good Food* survives with plenty of highly controversial on-screen support from relevant BBC television programmes. Publishers with handy television backing make forays into the market, most recently *Food Illustrated* from John Brown, which made very little headway on its own, has been rescued by Waitrose to become their in-store title.

Which neatly illustrates why stand-alone cooking magazines fail, they need some kind of Big Daddy, and recently there have been plenty of Big Daddies in the shape of customer-hungry supermarkets. Hence Sainsbury's own magazine, which prides itself on being a general-interest rather than a food magazine – though it is bought for the recipes – is flourishing, as are the Tesco, Sainsbury and Asda magazines which, though distributed free to customers, have tapped into the cooking niche.

And it comes back, yet again, to lifestyle. There are very few things we know women do regularly; they wake up, go to bed, want to have more money and be better understood, and they go to a supermarket. It makes sense that they will expect their supermarket, where, after all, they buy their food, to supply them with all the cooking magazines they need. Unlike gardening, cooking is a function of life; gardening is an extension.

There are already vast quantities of magazines fighting for attention on the news-stands – some would argue too many – and vast quantities of potential readers with less and less time to work out just which one is right for them. For any magazine to succeed, it must instantly attract the attention of its potential customer by clear signposting, plus enough "triggers" on the cover to prompt purchase. All in the space of about 30 seconds. Is it any wonder sales of women's magazines are suffering? Try sorting out one from another at the station news-stand when you've got about three minutes to catch the 6.32. Readers aren't going to bother to analyse the difference between one title and the next, it's up to the magazine to tell them. If your cover looks almost identical to the one next door, no wonder you've got problems.

The exciting news for publishers is that there is so much potential; hoards of dissatisfied female magazine junkies out there, looking for a title to call their own. The challenge is catching them before they give up their faith in magazines altogether. There are plenty of other leisure time temptations, even before the Internet kicks in. As publishers, we have no time to lose.

Sally O'Sullivan is Chief Executive of Cobal Communications and former editor of *Good Housekeeping*.

Have travel token, will buy

COLD, GREY January: A time for staying home at weekends and curling up with a newspaper. At least that's what seems to have happened, according to the latest monthly sales figures for newspapers.

While almost every newspaper registered an increase in January compared to the low sales month of December, it is the Sunday titles which have made some of the most spectacular gains. In all, five Sunday newspapers increased sales by over 5 per cent month on month. But from the tabloids to the broadsheets, from specialist titles to regional ones, Sunday was a good news day and every title showed some kind of increase.

The *Sunday Mirror* led the way with a 9.58 per cent increase, taking it to back above the two million figure. The paper is being made more "family friendly" with expanded editorial to add value to the product – however, that is yet to kick in and, as ever in the newspaper market these days, when you see a spectacular sales rise the best clue usually comes from looking at what the paper was giving away.

The *News of the World*, which raised sales by 6.2 per cent, spent its money on editorial rather than giveaways. In particular, it bought up the story of the couple who married in a radio station competition so it could tell its readers whether they had sex on their wedding night. It managed to prevail for a page and a half before informing its readers that they hadn't. If they had, presumably their story would have been worth more.

The *Mail on Sunday* relied on one of the oldest chestnuts in the business, the annual horoscope for the year, and spent heavily on television advertising to promote it. But this had only limited success. The paper's sales went up by just 0.43 per cent compared with December, but then again, it was the only title not to fall in December and so had no ground to make up.

Money just seems to burn holes in the pockets of Associated Newspapers, so a raft of editorial changes to the *MoS* are planned for March. The Programme television supplement will be wrapped inside the magazine, *Night and Day*, making it a weighty 96-page magazine on the first issue. At the same time the *Family Mail* section is to be replaced by a new review section.

ANALYSIS

PAUL MCCANN

The other heavy old January special in newspaper marketing is the travel giveaway. Because people are being bombarded with adverts from real holiday companies, newspapers decide to get in on the act and blantly give away tickets. The *Express* on Sunday, which is to be renamed *The Sunday Express* because that's what everyone calls it anyway, The *Mail on Sunday* and the *Sunday Mirror* all decided to give away flights, ferries or holidays to France, the

favourite country of newspaper marketing departments. The French must be growing under the weight of British newspaper readers grasping two-for-one tokens. Despite all this expensive effort, the inexorable downward movement of tabloid newspapers just kept on going. The red-top and mid-market Sunday tabloids sold an average 400,000 copies fewer in January this year than they did last year.

In the Sunday broadsheet

NATIONAL NEWSPAPER CIRCULATION				
Daily newspapers	December 1998	January 1999	% change	
<i>The Mirror</i>	2,214,981	2,289,373	+3.36	
<i>Daily Star</i>	527,603	539,991	+2.35	
<i>The Sun</i>	3,537,760	3,722,416	+5.22	
<i>The Express</i>	1,068,844	1,103,813	+3.27	
<i>Daily Mail</i>	2,318,287	2,342,694	+1.05	
<i>Daily Telegraph</i>	1,039,840	1,040,140	+0.03	
<i>Guardian</i>	390,514	399,152	+2.21	
<i>Independent</i>	218,389	219,549	+0.53	
<i>Times</i>	723,094	746,317	+3.21	
Sunday newspapers				
<i>News of the World</i>	4,062,561	4,314,352	+6.20	
<i>Sunday Mirror</i>	1,870,043	2,048,902	+9.56	
<i>Sunday People</i>	1,670,347	1,734,594	+3.85	
<i>Mail on Sunday</i>	2,281,506	2,291,247	+0.43	
<i>Express on Sunday</i>	973,846	1,009,683	+3.68	
<i>Independent on Sunday</i>	249,846	252,587	+1.10	
<i>Observer</i>	398,778	419,876	+5.29	
<i>Sunday Telegraph</i>	809,923	810,587	+0.08	
<i>Sunday Times</i>	1,305,589	1,371,869	+5.08	

market, the recovery of *The Observer*, which was hit hard in the gloom of December, made itself apparent. The *Observer* is now well above the 400,000 mark at 419,869, just a few thousand below its figure for January 1998. Either this is the paper's natural bottom limit – given that its weird layout experiments during 1998 pushed away even some core readers – or the rise is down to a rare burst of television advertising and the offer of free flights, free CDs, free holidays and free tickets for the Moot exhibition.

The *Times* and *Sunday Times* have both benefited from their heavy spending on television for the Books for Schools promotion, so *The Sunday Times* is the only Sunday broadsheet not to be down compared to January 1998. In fact the *Sunday* broadsheets sold 64,000 copies a week less than they did last year.

Unseen on the above table are good signs of growth from other Sunday papers. *Sunday Business* is now selling 53,000 copies a week and, thanks to its low base, it is up 11 per cent on December. *Sport First*, the other Sunday newspaper which was until recently given no chance, is now selling 84,000 copies each week. *Sport First* benefited from some television advertising and the two titles are on their way to proving the case for specialist newspapers on Sundays.

THE WORD ON THE STREET

WHAT IS going on at *The Sunday Times*? Its columnist seems to be feeling on mass. Meg Matthews is giving up her Yeall column in *Style*, reportedly because her husband Noel Gallagher is unhappy at seeing their life in print. Meanwhile, Zoë Heller has departed to the *Telegraph*, while Robert Harris, the star left-leaning columnist, and Ferdinand Mount, his opposite number on the right, have dropped out of recent issues. The paper says that the pair will be returning some day soon. But, as one senior insider says, to lose one star columnist is misfortune; to lose four is rather more than carelessness.

IT WAS once said that the McTaggart Memorial Lecture at the Edinburgh Television Festival was the biggest job application form in the TV business – so often did those giving it shortly leave their jobs for fresh fields. Unfortunately, those jockeying to be next director-general of the BBC can't wait until the festival in August to get noticed, especially as only one person will get to present it. Luckily David "two brains" Elstein, Cs's chief executive, can arrange his own lectures. As Oxford's first News International visiting professor in broadcasting, he has been



a particular brand of humour. A call made to its press office last week found a harassed press officer asking if we could call back: "Half a too of cocaine has just been found in Essex and we're completely snowed under." We waited for the other shoe to drop, but it never did.

THE CLASSIFIED pages of *The Stage* are not only the place to find actors and strip-teasers for *The Vanessa Show*. It caters for all desires from the wilder shores of show business. A highlight this week was an advert for a "Meatloaf impersonator". Not a plea for someone resembling a stodgy American dish, but a tribute band that had mislaid its own plump front man. Such are the vagaries of fame. One week we hear that William Hague once had a picture of Mr Loaf (as it says on his passport) on his wall, and now there's enough demand to merit a tribute band.

IN A more innocent age, at one daytime chat show the most valuable document wasn't the book of actors' agents, but a list of repeat guests. It was known as the "gobby punters book" and was indexed by opinion. One year there was much consternation on when the most eloquent racist was found to have died.

WORKING AT Customs and Excise obviously generates

British television is in disgrace - but other countries are producing confessional shows beyond our wildest nightmares

We need TV we can trust

I BELIEVE that I worked for most of my life in the golden age of television. Factual programmes were truthful, entertainment programmes were cheerful, and seeing was believing. But that was a while ago.

Now, it seems, we live in an age where the only truth is a lie. We have no way of knowing whether what the television companies present us with is true or false. The bond of trust has been broken.

The most conspicuous frauds, unmasked last week by *The Mirror*, are in the confessional chat shows. These are modelled closely on originals drawn from the great wasteland of American television. We now know that in many cases guests laying bare their personal histories were actors and impersonators, and were paid for their lies.

Am I surprised? Sadly, not at all. The chat shows' carelessness with the truth is the inevitable outcome of a TV culture in which nothing matters but money and ratings. Producers and researchers are under pressure to deliver audiences. Jobs depend on it. Advertisers demand it. And all too often the truth is twisted to achieve it.

Confessional chat shows are hardly creative television. But they harvest the ratings, and are cheap to make. They are often recorded back to back, two or three at a time, in the same studio and in front of the same audiences. All they need is a constant flow of guests with attention-getting tales to tell, usually from the wilder and weirder shores of human relationships. Small wonder that members of the cast of these rolling freak shows are not always quite what they seem.

This is not a personal attack on Vanessa Feltz. I feel for her now I believe she has been duped. And so has Trisha, over at *Anglia Television*. The present scandal has rocked an industry still reeling from the last one. Carlton's partly faked documentary *The Connection* was exposed as a style of programme-making that would shade whatever truths were necessary to produce what the market demanded.

Viewers are now rightly asking, what can they trust any more? The answer, of course, is: most of what they see. The news, for a start, is



Duped: Vanessa Feltz PA

widely and rightly trusted. Michael Buerk and Trevor McDonald may not have the full story to hand but they will tell you no lies.

Even news doesn't have a blameless record. I know of one case of simulated news footage, and another, fabricated story about the victim of an earthquake. I told senior executives. None of them wanted to know.

Some time after that, I left journalism, a profession that stands low in public esteem, for politics, which stands even lower.

So what's to be done? The easy answer is that TV must clean up its act. It would be a start if the "great and good" of TV, the veterans of its golden age who are now among its senior executives, were to concern themselves again with the cuts and bolts of programme-making.

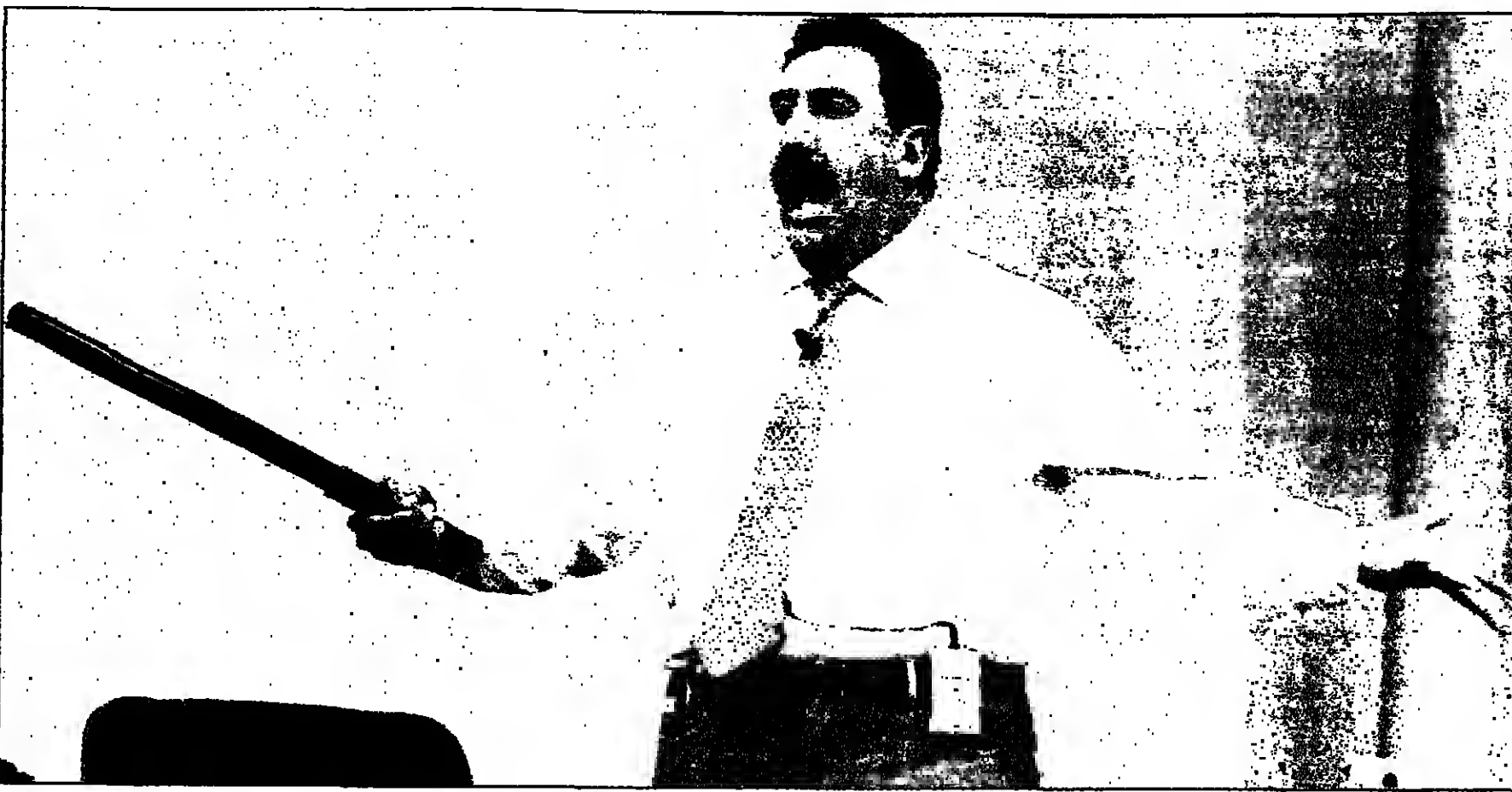
TV, like Parliament, can no longer be assumed to be a league of gentlemen. Searching questions - and even offensive ones - will have to be asked, not when a programme is finished, but even while it is being made. There should also be a blacklist of shady producers.

And the Royal Television Society, which confines itself mainly to seminars and the distribution of prizes, could concern itself with these issues of dishonesty that have brought such shame to the medium.

In Britain we used to have the best and most trustworthy television in the world. We can still retrieve it. But we must learn again the most important lesson of all - that programmes always matter more than profits.

Enough sleaze - in TV as in politics.

MARTIN BELL



Sooty on a bad trip: Brazil's number one confessional TV show host Ratinho wielding his truncheon to excite his already hysterical audience AP

A freak show (and no fakes)

Fake guests on *Vanessa* may be the lowest British television has gone so far. But it could get worse. Ms Feltz's Brazilian equivalent, known as Ratinho, "the Little Rat", is a lesson in how much further we could yet fall.

Like Vanessa Feltz he is a home-grown Jerry Springer, but his talk shows make Springer's look like *Blue Peter*. Take his popular "Deformity of the Week" feature, or his "pregnant" male guest, or the woman with the gouged-out eyes, not to mention the horribly twisted "Elephant Boy".

Ratinho, real name Carlos Massa, is far from little. He's a hulky man of 43, with a beer belly bulging over his waistband, but there is a distinctly rat-like expression in the eyes above his thick, black moustache. And he tends to spit saliva on to the camera lens when he gets worked up. Which he often does, brandishing

a truncheon wildly for extra effect.

Massa's nightly offering is a distinctly Brazilian version of the talk show, catering to the uneducated masses, stirring them up against corrupt politicians, the wealthy or the intellectuals while, in turn, selling downmarket products that sponsor the show. He can move from a tear-jerking item about a woman whose hand was chewed off by an Alsatian to introduce a juggling act or a popular band.

To ensure that he maintains the audience's attention, he uses a Little Rat puppet in a booth by the side of the stage, who either acts as a straight man or repeats his comments in a squeaky, cartoon voice. The puppet also batters a miniature truncheon on the booth, like Sooty on a bad trip.

Massa, a former shoe-shine boy and circus clown, decided that he wanted to help the poor and disen-

franchised in Brazil by running for congress. But he found he could get little done amid the country's bureaucracy. So he opted for TV. He made his name at the upstart channel TV Record, but after he began logging ratings of more than a third of all Brazilian viewers - often ahead of rival programmes on the nightly O Globo network, the world's fourth-largest - he was snapped up last autumn by Globo's rival, SBT Sistema Brasileiro de Televisão. The latter reportedly paid TV Record \$40m to get him out of a long-term contract, and he's said to be paid about \$4m a year.

On-stage fights are encouraged. The audience often joins in, as do stagehands and, on occasion, the presenter himself, truncheon and all. Ratinho will then turn to some theme - often government corruption, police violence or neglect of the poor by hospitals - working himself up to a frenzy while

pacing the stage like a caged lion.

The audience, mainly poor people unused to getting a fair hearing for their grievances, yell with delight. And their attention span is rarely tested. The "pregnant man" - surprise, surprise - turned out to be an overweight hoaxer. Massa said later that the man had been mentally unstable, but that the programme was paying for his treatment and so there was "no harm done".

After he launched his "Deformity of the Week" feature, turning the programme into a freak show, there were calls for the programme to be banned, but it is still winning higher ratings than football.

In case anyone should accuse him of insensitivity the "Elephant Boy" was not shown directly to the cameras. All viewers could see was a heavy-breathing silhouette of a little boy with a trunk instead of a nose. Ratinho's popularity attracts

major advertisers including Coca-Cola, but the big companies avoid appearing as sponsors during the show itself. Massa can walk across the stage, after a slot showing a baby with a mass of public hair, to a stand where he personally advertises ballpoint pens and domestic appliances.

Seeing their ratings follow him to his new channel, TV Record came up with an antidote - another big man, Gilberto Barros. Known as Leão Livre, "the Free Lion", he has been described as "a Ratinho clone gone horribly wrong", a man with a quieter, more condensing tone.

The lion's success? A boy who had half a face and had been castrated as a child. Barros asked the boy to bare his private parts to the camera, and the audience was treated to a close-up on a giant screen.

Well, at least that's one way of making sure the guests aren't fake.

PHIL DAVISON

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Sad but true: dead Britons make better headlines

TWELVE PEOPLE died in horrific circumstances in a single incident last week. You read all about it, you heard all about it. There was blanket coverage - photographs, graphics, special correspondents flown in, TV crews, the works.

Three hundred people died in horrific circumstances in a single incident last week. You may well have read nothing about it, unless you scan the news pages with care. The *Independent* carried a short story on an inside page: *The Guardian* and *Daily Telegraph* carried news-in-brief paragraphs, most papers did not mention the incident at all.

The difference between the two stories was simple. The 12 died in the French Alps. The 300 died off the coast of Indonesia when a ship sank in stormy seas. The avalanche, with a relatively small number of deaths, was a huge story; the sinking of the Indonesian ship, with its much larger death toll, was scarcely a story at all.

The glaring contrast between the two stories - tiny death toll, huge story; huge death toll, tiny story - brought into sharp focus a familiar paradox. Victoria Brittain, deputy foreign editor of *The Guardian*, noted the grim irony last week, as she points out: "I know the geographic shape of British newspapers." Broadly, at the heart of everything, is Britain; then comes Europe and the United States; then come the events on a distant stage. In the words of Michael Williams, executive editor at *The Independent*: "There are rings and rings. Anything that happens in Europe and America registers high on the news Richter scale... The news editor is interpreting the resonance for the reader. It's perhaps not how it should be, but it's how it is." What appears to be a story about "them out there" is partly a story about "us back here".

In addition to the basic question of "where", there is the equally important question of "who". A key task for a news

Disasters abroad get little coverage unless there are British casualties involved. By Steve Crawshaw

editor when scanning agency reports of a distant disaster is to check for evidence of *dieu-et-mon-droit* passport-carriers among the casualties, which could help propel the story on to the front page. Leonard Doyle, foreign editor at *The Independent*, notes: "The first question you are always asked is: 'Any British dead?'"

Finding a local angle for readers has always played a key role in parts of the British press. Other tragedies did not even make the news-in-brief -

be seen as more significant in a story than a pile of dead foreigners. The *Mirror's* headline after last week's drama in the French Alps was: "Two Brits saved from avalanche." Live Brit heroes can help lift the story, too. A *Times* headline declared: "British avalanche hero saves three."

The large number of dead in the Indonesian disaster meant that at least there was a mention in parts of the British press. Other tragedies did not even make the news-in-brief -



Chamonix disaster: small death toll, big story Reuters

Titanic was reported on the front page of the *Aberdeen Daily Journal* as: "Aberdeen man lost at sea." The reality is not quite so obsessive. The *Journal's* main headline that day proclaimed: "Atlantic disaster." It was the sub-headline which was given over to the locally significant fact: "Aberdeen man among those lost."

None the less, the spirit of the old *Titanic* story - it's the local death that counts, overmind all the others - holds true across Britain today. Even a not-dead Briton may

"nib" - column. News agencies reported that 20 died in floods in the Philippines last week; children were buried alive in a landslide; 30,000 people were evacuated from their homes. The news went unreported in newspapers in this country.

Part of the problem is that there are just too many horrors in the world out there. In the words of Simon Pearson, associate night editor at the *Daily Telegraph*: "You get disasters from Indonesia and the Philippines every month. Most of the time, they'll only make a nib."

If there's something different - if a British family is on board, or if it has been attacked by pirates - that would make more.

On the one hand, news editors are in search of something new to lock on to. On the other, familiarity - the "cultural click" - in one editor's phrase - is crucial. A key element of the avalanche story was that it took place in a skiing area popular with the British. In the words of John Bryant, deputy editor of *The Times*: "A lot of our readers will have skied there, or know people who have. It's almost a home story; as far as we are concerned."

Any news editor recognises the uneasy moment of hesitation over the lack of prominence for yet another tragedy in some little-visited part of the world. As Leonard Doyle argues: "You feel empathy - but what can we add?" Part of news editing is choosing stories that are significantly different from what has come before and will thus engage the reader's interest. Many admit to what Simon Pearson calls "a cynical business". But John Bryant at *The Times* argues: "The real crunch comes: will the reader read it?"

The system of newsdesk certainties can receive the occasional jolt, of course. After the Michael Buerk report on the Ethiopian famine in 1984 (and its even more famous Bob Geldof knock-on effect), newspapers which only a few days earlier had been abruptly rejecting aid-agency pleas for coverage of the famine were suddenly falling over themselves to make space. The supremely dull story, reported nowhere, was suddenly transformed into a supremely dramatic story, which covered the front pages. None of the facts on the ground had changed.

That sudden overturning of newsdesk sensibilities was, however, the exception, not the rule. Tragedies involving large numbers of people happen on a daily basis. Some you will hear about. Some you won't.

NEW FILMS

DON'T GO BREAKING MY HEART (PG)
Director: Will Patterson
Starring: Anthony Edwards, Jenny Seagrove
So how bad is Don't Go Breaking My Heart? Well, first off, it wastes the skills of ERT's Anthony Edwards as a Yankee sports therapist adrift in Blighty. Secondly, it overplays the supposed charms of Jenny Seagrove as the widowed mum he gets together with. This antique of a romantic weepie wheezes towards a finale so predictable that you'd have to be dead not to see it coming. West End: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue, Odeon Haymarket, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

I THINK I DO (15)
Director: Brian Sloan
Starring: Alexis Arquette, Christian Maelen
Ah, the wedding caper. An excuse for reunions, for an ensemble cast, for the tension of etiquette against emotion. Writer-director Brian Sloan ticks all the right boxes during this spry baby-boomer outing, but it's too hyperactive and ingratiating for its own good. West End: ABC Shaftesbury Avenue

JACK FROST (PG)
Director: Troy Miller
Starring: Michael Keaton, Mark Addy
The respective trajectories of two stars meet for an instant in this out-of-season Yuletide tale. On the way down goes Michael Keaton as a self-absorbed bluesman who dies and then gets reincarnated as a snowman. And on the way up is The Full Monty's Mark Addy as his salt-of-the-earth best mate. They meet, they pass, and formula fun is had by all. West End: UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL (LA VITA È BELLA) (PG)
Director: Roberto Benigni
Starring: Roberto Benigni, Nicoletta Braschi
See The Independent Recommends, right. West End: Barbican Screen, Curzon Mayfair, Odeon Kensington, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on the Hill, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea. And local cinemas

MADELINE (U)
Director: Daisy Von Scherler Meyer
Starring: Frances McDormand, Nigel Hawthorne
All aboard for storybook Fifties Paris. That gingerbread house on the corner is the boarding school attended by nine-year-old Madeline (Hatty Jones). That hatchet-faced woman out front is the strict instructor (Frances McDormand). That car going by is a Citroën. You get the picture. This overclogged rendering of Ludwig Bemmelman's kids' stories looks a shade one-dimensional; all artistry and no art. West End: Clapham Picture House, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea, Virgin Trocadero. And local cinemas

MY GIANT (PG)
Director: Michael Lehmann
Starring: Billy Crystal, George Mureau
Billy Crystal plods his way through Michael "Heathers" Lehmann's Lilliputian comedy about a sleazebag Hollywood agent who gets a few life lessons when he runs into a saintly giant (George Mureau) in Romania. Expect size jokes in the middle, and glib morals at the end. Local: Acton Park Royal, Warner Village, Edmonston Lee Valley UCI 12, Fetham Cinesworld the Movies, Harrow Warner Village

YOUR FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS (18)
Director: Neil LaBute
Starring: Ben Stiller, Jason Patric
Another troubling X-ray of American mores from In the Company of Men director Neil LaBute. Your Friends and Neighbours widens his focus a little, yet in all other respects this looks like a carbon copy of LaBute's debut. There are the same stage-bound confines, the same structured misanthropy, the same dense weave of dialogue. Two features in, and LaBute has chewed this bone to bits already. West End: Curzon Soho, Gate Notting Hill, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Renoir, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket. And local cinemas

GENERAL RELEASE

ANTZ (PG)
Computer-animated trifle about a worker ant (voiced by Woody Allen) who tries to break out of his totalitarian rat. West End: Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Trocadero, Repertory, The Lux Cinema, Prince Charles. And local cinemas

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY (U)
In the follow-up to Babe, knockabout comedy is kept to a minimum in favour of a bleak animatronic fairytale. West End: Barbican Screen, Plaza, Ritzy Cinema. Local: Edmonston Lee Valley UCI 12, Richmond Odeon Studio. Repertory: National Film Theatre

A BUG'S LIFE (U)
See The Independent Recommends, above. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Clapham Picture House, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Leicester Square, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea. And local cinemas

BULWORTH (18)
Warren Beatty's new political satire is crude and condescending on occasion, yet genuinely audacious and committed to. West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Virgin Trocadero. And local cinemas

ELIZABETH (15)
Shekhar Kapur's story of a female figurehead struggling to gain purchase in a male world largely neglects the opportunities for fun in a story of independence triumphing over cruelty. West End: ABC Pantons Street, Odeon Mezzanine

ENEMY OF THE STATE (15)
Will Smith and Gene Hackman star in this big, noisy and effectively claustrophobic conspiracy thriller. West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Virgin Trocadero. And local cinemas

HIDEOUS KINKY (15)
Through the backdoor of 1970s Morocco trends Kate Winslet's hippie single-mum with her two daughters (Bella Riza, Carrie Mullin). Meanwhile, gormless backpackers, Sufi teachers and Said Taghmaoui's love-interest weave across the narrative. West End: Clapham Picture House, Curzon Soho, Curzon Menzies, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Renoir, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Repertory Phoenix Cinema. And local cinemas

HILARY AND JACKIE (15)
Full-throttle playing from Rachel Griffiths and Emily Watson sustains Anand Tucker's warts-and-all biopic of the Du Pré sisters. West End: Chelsea Cinema, Curzon Soho, Odeon Swiss Cottage. Repertory: Watermans Arts Centre. And local cinemas

HOW STELLA GOT HER GROOVE BACK (15)
Stella got her groove back by taking off to Jamaica with her feisty buddy (Whoopi Goldberg), sashaying around in a bikini and getting herself a little love action in the form of a man young enough to be her son. Essentially this is Shirley Valentine with an Afro-American spin. West End: Ritzy Cinema, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

LITTLE VOICE (15)
Timid Jane Horrocks perfects strident Shirley Bassey/Judy Garland impersonations. Bracing black comedy, Horrocks' vocal pyrotechnics, plus a marvellously weighted turn from Michael Caine push it through to the final curtain. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Odeon Marble Arch, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road. And local cinemas

LIVING OUT LOUD (15)
See The Independent Recommends, above. West End: Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

THE MASK OF ZORRO (PG)
This gaudy swashbuckler gallops full-speed

through 19th-century California in the company of Antonio Banderas's authentically Hispanic do-gooder. West End: Odeon Mezzanine, Virgin Fulham Road, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

MULAN (U)
This animated feature about a girl who disguises herself as a soldier to spare her ailing father from the certain death of combat is one of the most visually innovative movies that Disney has ever made. West End: Odeon Mezzanine, Ritzy Cinema. And local cinemas

THE OPPOSITE OF SEX (18)
See The Independent Recommends, above. West End: Ritzy Cinema, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

PECKER (18)
Trash auteur John Waters swerves into sunnier streets with Pecker, his fluffy satirical tale of an amateur Baltimore photographer who is adopted as a fly-on-the-wall artist by the New York elite. Pecker goes big on blue-collar kitsch without ever making any real, stringent point. West End: Clapham Picture House, Metro, Odeon Camden Town, Virgin Trocadero. And local cinemas

PI (15)
What sustains the film is the ingenuity of its central conceit, its ongoing "mathematics in the language of nature" mantra and too-cool-for-school demeanour. West End: ABC Pantons Street

PRACTICAL MAGIC (12)
Practical Magic sees Sandra Bullock and Nicole Kidman cast as two sisters raised from a line of witches and hexing any unlucky man who swings into their orbit. West End: Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

THE PRINCE OF EGYPT (U)
In planning his cartoon life of Moses, DreamWorks honcho Jeffrey Katzenberg envisaged it "painted by Claude Monet and photographed by David Lean". The end result ends up looking more like The Ten Commandments by way of Joseph and his Technicolor Dreamcoat. West End: Empire Leicester Square, UCI Whiteleys. Repertory: Phoenix Cinema, Watermans Arts Centre. And local cinemas

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN (15)
Steven Spielberg's Second World War drama featuring Tom Hanks and harsh, devastating battle sequences. West End: Plaza

SHAKESPEARE IN LOVE (15)
See The Independent Recommends, above. West End: ABC Tottenham Court Road, Barbican Screen, Clapham Picture House, Empire Leicester Square, Notting Hill, Renoir, Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon Swiss Cottage, Ritzy Cinema, Screen on Baker Street, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Trocadero. And local cinemas

STEPMOM (12)
This sugar-glazed, oven-ready affair casts an out-of-sorts Susan Sarandon as a middle-aged matriarch squabbling over her offspring with the new model mom (Julia Roberts) that hubby Ed Harris has hooked up with. West End: Odeon Kensington, Odeon Marble Arch, Odeon West End, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Chelsea. And local cinemas

TWO GIRLS AND A GUY (18)
Heather Graham and Natasha Gregson Warner are the duped girlfriends of Robert Downey Jr's love-rat prima donna. Two Girls and a Guy gives them plenty of room to move and breathe, turning the yarn into a pungent acting showcase. West End: Virgin Fulham Road, Virgin Haymarket

VERY BAD THINGS (18)
Peter Berg's debut serves up swaggering gross-out comedy in a Loaded-magazine style, but it's ultimately a film with nowhere to go. West End: Odeon Camden Town, Odeon Marble Arch, Plaza, UCI Whiteleys, Virgin Trocadero, Warner Village West End. And local cinemas

THE INDEPENDENT RECOMMENDS

THE FIVE BEST FILMS

Life Is Beautiful (La Vita è Bella) (PG)
Roberto Benigni directs and stars in this tragicomic fable about an Italian Jew who tries to shield his boy from the horrors of a Nazi concentration camp by pretending that the brutal regime is an elaborate game.

Shakespeare in Love (15)
This enjoyable romp suggests how romance fired Shakespeare with the creative inspiration for Romeo and Juliet. Joseph Fiennes and Gwyneth Paltrow (above) head a multi-star cast.

Living Out Loud (15)
Holly Hunter plays a Manhattan woman who, left by her husband, befriends the elevator operator in her building. Writer Richard LaGravenese handles everything with affectionate restraint.

A Bug's Life (U)
More child-friendly than Antz, this animated feature spins another enjoyable yarn about an ant colony and its battle to survive. Kevin Spacey provides the voice of the chief grasshopper.

The Opposite of Sex (18)
Christina Ricci plays 16-year-old Mitch-on-wheels Dedee, who causes all kinds of havoc when she moves in with her half-brother (Martin Donovan).

ANTHONY QUINN

THE FIVE BEST PLAYS

Copenhagen
(Duchess Theatre, London)
Michael Frayn's profound and haunting meditation on science, morality and the mysteries of human motivation. To 7 Aug

Oklahoma!
(Lyceum Theatre, London)
Widely regarded as the best ever. Trevor Nunn's glorious production of the Rogers and Hammerstein classic fully deserves its West End transfer. To 26 Jun

The Street of Crocodiles
(Queen's Theatre, London)
Triumphal revival (right) of Theatre de Complicite's surreal and searing plunge into the imagination of Polish-Jewish writer Bruno Schulz. To 26 Feb

The Winter's Tale
(RSC, Stratford)
An amazingly rich and complex performance from Antony Sher in Gregory Doran's Romaov-style production. In rep to 4 Mar

Darkness Falls
(Palace Theatre, Watford)
Jonathan Holloway's coherently creepy double-bill of ghostly chills about our deepest wishes and the price we pay for them. To 26 Feb

PAUL TAYLOR

THE FIVE BEST SHOWS

Monet in the 20th Century
(Royal Academy)
The gardens and his ponds at Giverny dissolve into elemental visions: fiery lights, haze, liquid reflections, voids and depths. The strange last works of Impressionism. To 18 Apr

Portraits by Ingres
(National Gallery)
Some of the most intense portraiture ever. Women: exquisite mixtures of flesh and fabric, dreams of sex and money. To 25 Apr

Patrick Caulfield
(Hayward Gallery)
This survey of nearly 50 years' worth of work offers Caulfield's full range (right) - notably, those vivid isometric outlines, hatched in with translucent colour. To 11 Apr

Disasters of War
(Wolverhampton Art Gallery)
"I saw this" - three ages of European war through the etchings of Jacques Callot. Goya and Otto Diez. Visions from the blackest of times. To 20 Mar

Thinking Aloud
(Cornerhouse, Manchester)
Sculptor Richard Wentworth curates an exploration of creativity in art and design: an assortment of rough drafts, doodles and models. To 28 Feb

TOM LUBBOCK

CINEMA

WEST END

ABC PANTONS STREET
(0870-902 0404) • Piccadilly
Elizabeth 2.10pm, 5.10pm, 8.10pm
Lock, Stock & Two Smoking Barrels 1.10pm, 3.35pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm
My Name Is Joe 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.20pm, 8.45pm (PG) 1.25pm, 3.30pm, 6.10pm, 8.35pm

ABC PICCADILLY
(0171-267 3222) (from 1pm) • Piccadilly
Curious George Hamant 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
Switchblade Sisters 1.35pm, 4pm, 6.20pm, 8.40pm

ABC SHAFTESBURY AVENUE
(0870-902 0402) • Leicester Square
Total Recall 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.40pm, 4.05pm, 6.30pm, 8.55pm
I Think I Do 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.05pm, 8.30pm

ABC SWISS CENTRE
(0870-902 0403) • Leicester Square
Buffalo 66 3.55pm, 8.40pm
Class Trip 2.20pm, 4.30pm, 6.45pm, 8.55pm
U2 Rattle and Hum 1.40pm, 6.25pm
Hotel du Nord 2.40pm, 4.50pm, 7pm, 9.05pm
La Vie Revee des Anges 1.25pm, 3.45pm, 6.05pm, 8.25pm

ABC TOTTENHAM COURT ROAD
(0870-902 0414) • Tottenham Court Road
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

BARBICAN SCREEN
(0171-638 8891) • Barbican Life
Beautiful 6.15pm, 8.40pm
Shakespeare in Love 6pm, 8.40pm

CHELSEA CINEMA
(0171-351 3742) • Sloane Square
Hilary and Jackie 1.10pm, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.40pm

CLAPHAM PICTURE HOUSE
(0171-498 3323) • Clapham Common
A Bug's Life 1pm, 3pm, 5pm, 7pm, 9pm
Hideoous Kinky 1.30pm, 4.05pm, 6.30pm, 8.55pm
Madeline 1.15pm, 3.15pm, 5.15pm, 7.30pm, 9.30pm
Shakespeare in Love 1.45pm, 4.15pm, 6.45pm, 8.20pm

CURZON MAYFAIR
(0171-369 1720) • Green Park
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

CURZON SOHO
(0171-734 2255) (12noon-6pm) • Leicester Square
Hideoous Kinky 1.45pm, 4.15pm, 6.45pm, 9pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

EMPIRE LEICESTER SQUARE
(0990-888990) • Leicester Square
Meet Joe Black 12noon, 3.40pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

GATE NOTTING HILL
(0171-727 4043) • Notting Hill
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

METRO
(0171-734 1506) • Piccadilly
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

CURZON MINEMA
(0171-369 1723) • Hyde Park Corner
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

NOTTING HILL CORONET
(0171-727 6705) • Notting Hill
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN CHELSEA
(0870-907 0710) • Sloane Square
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN FULHAM ROAD
(0870-907 0711) • South Kensington
Hideoous Kinky 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN TROCADERO
(0870-907 0712) • Piccadilly
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN WHITELEYS
(0870-907 0713) • Piccadilly
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN WATFORD
(0870-907 0714) • Watford
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0715) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0716) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0717) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0718) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0719) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0720) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0721) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0722) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
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VIRGIN WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0723) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
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The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0724) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
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The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

VIRGIN WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0725) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
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WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0726) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
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WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0727) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
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WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0728) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
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WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0729) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
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WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0730) • Wimborne
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WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0731) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
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WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0732) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
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WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0733) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
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WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0734) • Wimborne
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WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0735) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0736) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0737) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm

WIMBORNE
(0870-907 0738) • Wimborne
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm, 8.30pm
The Opposite of Sex 1.20pm, 3.45pm, 6.10pm

